

May 12, 2022

Dear Mayor Harrell,

I am writing to you on behalf of People for Climate Action - Seattle; we are the local chapter of a countywide coalition of groups who work with city and county governments toward effective climate action.

We were dismayed to see you publicly celebrate the start of Seattle's cruise season on April 23rd.

You may not be aware that cruise ships, along with the airplane flights that most passengers take to start their cruises, have an outsize impact on climate. In 2019, when almost half a million people flew to Seattle to take cruises, the ships emitted about 1.1 million tons of greenhouse gasses, and the associated flights emitted about 0.8 tons, for a total of almost **1.9 million tons** of climate-destroying greenhouse gasses emitted during the six-month cruise season. This amount is about one-third the size of the emissions from the *entire city of Seattle during all of 2018*. And it's from a non-essential industry that also pollutes the ocean, pollutes the air, mistreats its workers, and spreads Covid.

The Port claims that cruise ships bring up to \$900 million in economic activity to the state, but nearly 11% of that money - \$98.3 million - is earned by selling fuel to the ships - fuel that then accelerates the climate crisis when it's burned during the voyage.

Celebrating this industry is contrary to the Climate Pledge that you signed.

Please don't be fooled by the environmental gloss the Port puts on cruising. Please use your influence to help the Port transition away from climate-destroying activities like cruises to ones that restore our environment and the well-being of our communities and the larger world.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,
Elizabeth Burton

on behalf of [People for Climate Action - Seattle](#)

References:

almost 1.9 million tons of GHG from cruise ships & flights: calculations posted at Greenhouse Gas Emissions at seattlecruisecontrol.org.

one-third of Seattle's 2018 emissions: See Seattle's [2018 Community Greenhouse Gas Emissions Inventory](#); comparing to Expanded GHG Emissions, p. 18.

pollutes the ocean: See [Regulating the West Coast Cruise Industry](#), by Stand.earth and West Coast Environmental Law, 2021, p. 8: A reported 31 billion litres of pollution dumped during the entire Alaska cruise season is equivalent to 8.2 million gallons. Seattle hosts a little less than half of Alaskan cruises, hence responsible for approximately 4 million gallons per season.

pollutes the air: See [Bunker Fuel - Nasty Tar Sludge](#), Cruise Law News, 2010. For a more technical approach, see [Bunker Fuel - an overview](#), Science Direct, 2019.

mistreats its workers: See [Working on a Cruise Ship Can be Brutal](#), businessinsider.com, April 3, 2020.

spreads Covid: Cruise ships have been spreading Covid since the beginning of the pandemic, and continue to do so. See [Carnival Cruise Ship passengers say COVID overwhelmed ship](#), Seattle Times, May 4, 2022 for a recent, local example. This winter, thousands of crew members with Covid were stuck on "plague ships" in the Caribbean: [Royal Caribbean adds Fourth Cruise Ship to its Fleet of Floating Quarantine Facilities](#), Cruise Law News, Jan. 11, 2022.

\$98.3 million per year from selling fuel to cruise ships: slide from presentation at Port Commission meeting, March 22, 2022

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Direct Impacts by Activity

Projected Direct Impacts by Economic Activity of Cruise Operations of the Port of Seattle

Activity	Revenues (mils 2018 \$)	Wages (mils 2018 \$)
Passenger Spending	\$226.8	\$83.2
On Shore Staff	\$28.4	\$14.5
Maritime Services	\$27.8	\$14.2
Maintenance	\$24.2	\$7.4
Provisioning	\$60.2	\$0.7
Fuel	\$98.3	\$1.7
Crew Spending	\$2.1	\$0.9
Total	\$467.8	\$122.7



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