



Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington DC 20515

Peter A. DeFazio  
Chairman

Katherine W. Dedrick  
Staff Director

Sam Graves  
Ranking Member

Paul J. Sass  
Republican Staff Director

May 1, 2020

Dr. Robert R. Redfield, MD  
Director  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)  
1600 Clifton Road  
Atlanta, Georgia 30329-4027

Dr. Redfield:

Long before the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic began to race around the world, affecting local communities, churches, cities, homes, hospitals, and cruise ships sailing at sea, the cruise industry had a problem managing, containing, and responding to public health outbreaks. A variety of recent media reports have also called into question the response of the Carnival Corporation,<sup>1</sup> and its nine affiliated cruise lines with 109 passenger vessels, to the coronavirus pandemic.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has also highlighted the large number of coronavirus infections on Carnival Corporation cruise lines.

On March 23, 2020, the CDC reported that the *Diamond Princess*, with 328 Americans onboard, and the *Grand Princess*, which docked in the United States, had more than 800 total COVID-19 cases, including 10 deaths.<sup>3</sup> Both are operated by Princess Cruises, a subsidiary cruise line of the Carnival Corporation. The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases on those two ships is more than all of the confirmed cases in the states of Montana, Wyoming, North Dakota, Alaska and Hawaii as of April 22, 2020.<sup>4</sup> According to the CDC, “During the initial stages of the COVID-19 pandemic, the *Diamond Princess* was the setting of the largest outbreak outside mainland China.”

---

<sup>1</sup> See, for instance: Austin Carr and Chris Palmeri, “Carnival Executives Knew They Had a Virus Problem, But Kept the Party Going,” *Bloomberg Businessweek*, April 16, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2020-carnival-cruise-coronavirus/>.

<sup>2</sup> “Our Brands,” Carnival Corporation & PLC, accessed here: <https://www.carnivalcorp.com/corporate-information/our-brands>.

<sup>3</sup> “Public Health Responses to COVID-19 Outbreaks on Cruise Ships — Worldwide, February–March 2020,” *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, March 27, 2020 / 69(12); 347-352, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), accessed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6912e3.htm>.

<sup>4</sup> “Number of COVID-19 Cases in the U.S., by State or Territory,” Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), accessed here: [https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html#anchor\\_1586784349](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/cases-updates/cases-in-us.html#anchor_1586784349).

*Bloomberg* has reported that at least nine of Carnival's ships have been infected with COVID-19 resulting in more than 1,500 confirmed infections and at least 39 deaths.<sup>5</sup>

Recent media allegations, including the story in *Bloomberg*, regarding Carnival Corporation and some of its affiliated cruise lines' responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are quite disturbing.<sup>6</sup> They suggest that officials at Carnival were aware of the threats to some of its ships and did not take appropriate actions, which may have led to greater infections and quicker spread of the disease. Even a senior CDC official, who leads the CDC's cruise ship task force was quoted as saying she had a hard time believing that Carnival was simply "a victim of happenstance."<sup>7</sup>

As the world continues to confront the coronavirus pandemic we expect that travel restrictions will eventually ease, and cruise ships will begin to sail again. We also believe that when that happens more robust health precautions and new social distancing protocols will be paramount to preventing the re-emergence and spread of new COVID-19 infections. The CDC, for instance, has linked the spread of COVID-19 from passengers on cruise ships to 15 states.<sup>8</sup>

However, as of April 23, 2020, none of the front facing web-pages from any of Carnival Corporation's nine affiliated cruise lines – Carnival Cruise Line,<sup>9</sup> Princess Cruises,<sup>10</sup> Holland America Line,<sup>11</sup> Seabourn,<sup>12</sup> P&O Cruises (Australia),<sup>13</sup> Costa Cruises,<sup>14</sup> AIDA Cruises,<sup>15</sup> P&O Cruises (UK)<sup>16</sup> and Cunard<sup>17</sup> – mentioned a single word about COVID-19, coronavirus, or the precautions these cruise lines intend to take once the CDC lifts its "No Sail Order" for cruise lines.<sup>18</sup> Instead, these sites are advertising various images of couples dining and dancing, musicians entertaining and lines of children holding hands and playing.

The Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure of the U.S. House of Representatives has broad jurisdiction over maritime transportation issues, including those issues related to passenger vessels and various international treaties, including the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS). All cruise ships – regardless of what flag they are registered under or

---

<sup>5</sup> Austin Carr and Chris Palmeri, "Carnival Executives Knew They Had a Virus Problem, But Kept the Party Going," *Bloomberg Businessweek*, April 16, 2020, accessed here: <https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2020-carnival-cruise-coronavirus/>.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Public Health Responses to COVID-19 Outbreaks on Cruise Ships — Worldwide, February–March 2020," *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, March 27, 2020 / 69(12): 347-352, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), accessed here: <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/wr/mm6912e3.htm>.

<sup>9</sup> Carnival Cruise Line, accessed here: [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/brandpage\\_ccl.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/brandpage_ccl.html).

<sup>10</sup> Princess Cruises, accessed here: [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/brandpage\\_PCL.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/brandpage_PCL.html).

<sup>11</sup> Holland America Line, accessed here: [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/BrandPage.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/BrandPage.html).

<sup>12</sup> Seabourn, accessed here: [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/brandpage\\_SBN.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/brandpage_SBN.html).

<sup>13</sup> P&O Cruises (Australia), accessed here:

[https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/BrandPage\\_POAustralia.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/BrandPage_POAustralia.html).

<sup>14</sup> Costa Cruises, accessed here: [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/BrandPage\\_Costa.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/BrandPage_Costa.html).

<sup>15</sup> AIDA Cruises, [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/brandpage\\_AIDA.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/brandpage_AIDA.html).

<sup>16</sup> P&O Cruises (UK), accessed here: [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/brandpage\\_POCruises.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/brandpage_POCruises.html).

<sup>17</sup> Cunard, accessed here: [https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en\\_US/brandpage\\_CUN.html](https://www.worldsleadingcruiselines.com/en_US/brandpage_CUN.html).

<sup>18</sup> "Quarantine and Isolation: Cruise Ship Guidance," Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), accessed here, <https://www.cdc.gov/quarantine/cruise/index.html>.

where they sail – must operate in full compliance with SOLAS convention standards which regulate maritime safety related issues.

In order to better understand what information Carnival Corporation and its affiliated cruise lines had, and when they had it, regarding the potential infection of COVID-19 to its passengers and crew, the public health implications of possible exposure, and what decisions Carnival Corporation and its various affiliated lines made regarding the health and safety of their passengers and crew, we are requesting that you provide the Committee with the records listed below. The search for all of the records below may be limited to January 1, 2020 to the present.

1. A copy of all communications, including, but not limited to, e-mails, instant messages, and text messages, from any CDC employee with any Carnival Corporation employee or officer or any Carnival Corporation affiliated ship's crew, officer, or medical or health care related staff, discussing, referring to, or referencing COVID-19 or coronavirus. This should include, but not be limited to individuals on any of the nine reported Carnival ships that reported positive cases of COVID-19.<sup>19</sup>
2. A copy of all records discussing, referring to or referencing COVID-19 or coronavirus provided to or received from any Carnival Corporation employee, including, but not limited to, any Carnival Corporation affiliated ship's crew, officer, or medical or health care related staff. This should include, but not be limited to, individuals both at Carnival Corporation headquarters and Carnival affiliated employees on any of the nine reported Carnival ships that reported positive cases of COVID-19. It should also include, but not be limited to, plans or procedures to respond to, prevent, or contain coronavirus infections on board passenger vessels, as well as health alerts, data on infection rates, medical memorandum, or similar records regarding actual or potential coronavirus infections.
3. A copy of all records discussing, referring to, or referencing COVID-19 or coronavirus regarding either Carnival Corporation or any affiliated Carnival Corporation ships, including, but not limited to, the nine reported Carnival ships that reported positive cases of COVID-19, and any employee of the CDC, Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), the California Department of Public Health, Florida Department of Health, or any individuals on the White House's COVID-19 Economic Recovery Task Force also known as the "Great American Economic Revival Industry Group" on Hospitality. This should include, but not be limited to, all communications, including e-mails, instant messages, and text messages.

We appreciate your attention to this matter. Please see the attachment for instructions regarding the preparation of these records. Please deliver one set of these records electronically to the Majority Staff and one set of records electronically to the Minority Staff.

We request that delivery of these records begin on May 15, 2020. We will consider a rolling production of these records if you are unable to fully complete this response by this date. However,

---

<sup>19</sup> *Bloomberg* reported that COVID-19 infections had occurred on board the following Carnival owned ships: Diamond Princess, Costa Magica, Costa Favolosa, Grand Princess, Ruby Princess, Costa Luminosa, Costa Victoria, Zaandam and the Coral Princess.

Director Robert Redfield

May 1, 2020

Page 4

for any delay beyond the May 15, 2020, deadline, your staff must coordinate a timeline for delivery of these records with the Committee's staff.

To make arrangements for electronic delivery of these records, or if you have any questions regarding this request, please have your staff contact [REDACTED] of the Majority Staff at [REDACTED] or via e-mail at [REDACTED]

Sincerely,



PETER A. DeFAZIO  
Chair



SEAN PATRICK MALONEY  
Chair  
Subcommittee on Coast Guard  
and Maritime Transportation

Enclosure: Attachment A – Responding to House Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure Records requests in the 116th Congress

cc: The Honorable Sam Graves, Ranking Member

The Honorable Bob Gibbs, Ranking Member,  
Subcommittee on Coast Guard and Maritime Transportation