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May 19, 2020

The Honorable Andrew Cuomo  
Governor  
State of New York  
Albany, NY

Dear Governor Cuomo:

The Passenger Vessel Association (PVA) represents owners and operators of U.S.-flagged passenger vessels that operate throughout New York State. These include public ferries (the Staten Island Ferry); private ferries (New York Waterway, Seastreak); sightseeing excursion boats, dinner vessels, and sailing charters. There are 49 PVA members based in New York State that operate nearly 400 vessels in the state. Nationwide, the domestic passenger vessel industry safely carries more than 200 million passengers every year.

PVA is working hard to enable its members to restore their operations in a manner that is safe for passengers, crew, and the community at large. Accordingly, PVA has developed and released a guidance document entitled *Reopening Guidelines: Getting the Domestic Passenger Vessel Industry Back Underway* (attached). Developed by the PVA Safety and Security Committee, the document helps PVA members take the steps necessary to assure the traveling public that we will protect their health and well-being when onboard their vessels. We urge that you take this guidance in consideration as New York continues to open its economy.

PVA's Reopening Guidelines stress the importance of developing and implementing policies and procedures to address social distancing for passengers and members of the crew; facial coverings; rigorous cleaning and disinfection of surfaces; employee health monitoring; the proper use of personal protective equipment; and promotion of healthy hygiene practices.

Ferries in New York, public and private, provide essential services and are an integral part of the state's transportation network. They currently offer "lifeline" services with drastically reduced passenger loads and fewer trips per day, while adhering to health and safety protocol. Other types of passenger vessels have been completely shut down during the past two months. These for-profit businesses are suffering substantial economic losses and it is critical for them to be able to reopen as soon as it can be done safely.



PVA is familiar with your *NY Forward* policy. We believe that most of our members' vessels, including the dinner boats, should be considered to be in the category of "restaurants" and therefore be included in the Phase 3 category. PVA has also reviewed and distributed to its members your *Interim Guidance for Commercial Fishing Services and For-Hire Vessels*.

A vessel that carries a limited number of passengers on an open-air deck with social distancing and a facial covering policy should be allowed to begin service now. For instance, New Jersey Governor Murphy's Executive Order 146 issued on May 16 permits charter fishing and for-hire vessels to operate subject to specified protocols. A passenger on an open-air deck wearing a facial covering or observing proper social distancing is equivalent to a person on a beach or in a public park.

Thank you for your consideration. PVA looks forward to working with you to protect public health in New York while restoring the economic well-being of the state's passenger vessel industry.

Sincerely,



Colleen Stephens  
PVA President, 2020

