

Diggs, Victoria

From: Robert Hodson <robert.f.hodson@gmail.com>
Sent: Monday, September 9, 2024 8:16 AM
To: Web Mailbox for BOS
Subject: [EXTERNAL] Fwd: PRESERVE YORKTOWN Dueling Op-Eds
Attachments: Daily Press Op-Ed.pdf; Daily Press Lobbyist Op-Ed.pdf

Dear Supervisors

I am sharing an email sent out by Preserve Yorktown yesterday in response to a DP/Pilot op-ed by the Princess Lobbyist, Frank Wagner. They are definitely still looking to expand in Virginia. PY has learned more about this industry since trying to come to Yorktown, the links below tell the story.

I appreciate your efforts to continue to hold the line against cruise ships in Yorktown. I am more than happy to discuss this with any supervisor if they would like to learn more.

Bob

----- Forwarded message -----

From: <preserveyorktown@gmail.com>
Date: Sun, Sep 8, 2024 at 12:50 PM
Subject: PRESERVE YORKTOWN Dueling Op-Eds
To: Preserve Yorktown <preserve-yorktown@googlegroups.com>

A Princess lobbyist penned an op-ed in the Daily Press touting the benefits of the cruise industry. They definitely want to expand the industry in Virginia and have been in talks with Newport News recently. The op-ed and our response are attached. We need to stay vigilant.

A few things...

We are still hoping to get a city ordinance in York County to prevent this industry from trying again in the future.

We are planning to petition the Commonwealth for regulations to appropriately manage any expansion in VA that will protect the public and our waters.

If you haven't already done so, please...

Like, follow, and share [facebook.com/protectvirginia](https://www.facebook.com/protectvirginia)

Visit and bookmark [Protect-Virginia.org](https://www.Protect-Virginia.org)

BTW - this is an excellent [50 minute documentary](#) on the cruise industry, share it with your friends.

Thanks! Preserve Yorktown & Protect Virginia!

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The group is only for individuals interested in preserving and protecting the character of historic Yorktown and to stop massive cruise ships. If this is not your interest, please unsubscribe.

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/preserveyorktown/>

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Virginia doesn't need the harm caused by cruise lines



A sign outside the Tabb Library in York County encourages residents to attend a meeting in January for those opposed to planned cruise ship stops in Yorktown by Princess Cruises. The company canceled its plans in February. Anna Dorl/Freelance

As a Princess Cruise Lines lobbyist, Frank Wagner's job is to

pen guest columns such as “Cruise traffic represents untapped potential for Virginia” on Aug. 25. We challenge the claim that expansion would be good for the commonwealth. Following the multibillion-dollar cruise industry playbook, Wagner highlights the supposed benefits of increased cruise traffic in Virginia while ignoring the enormous potential for environmental and cultural damage.

Cruise companies are questionable business partners. Virtually all large cruise ships are foreign registered to avoid U.S. taxes and labor laws, while taking full advantage of the infrastructure, emergency services and other amenities of the port cities they visit. The industry spends millions each year lobbying to prevent meaningful federal, state and local regulatory controls on their activities. Largely self-monitored, cruise lines repeatedly fail at voluntary compliance with existing regulations.

The cruise passenger’s ticket is essentially a loss-leader. Once aboard, vacationers are tempted to splurge on onboard shopping, dining and gambling. In early 2024, Princess lobbyists, including Wagner, pressed the Virginia legislature for a bill to allow onboard gambling in Virginia waters (HB1478). The purpose? To maximize dollars spent on board while minimizing dollars spent in localities. Praised by Wagner, who said gambling permission would “roll out the welcome mat” for cruise companies in Virginia, the 2024 bill was defeated. However, it is sure to reappear in the near future.

A recent study, “The Economics of Cruise Tourism in Key West: Behind the Cruise Industry’s Propaganda Veil,” concludes that passengers spend roughly 20-70% fewer dollars ashore than the industry contends; that port fees paid to local governments are smaller than the industry claims; and that cruise

passengers spend far less per visit than “stayover” tourists do. We have found no independent evidence to corroborate Wagner’s claim that U.S. cruise tourism converts into future longer-term visits.

The Key West study also noted that cruise lines often require fees from onshore tour operators and retail establishments wanting to do business with cruise line passengers. This “pay-to-play” practice is not mentioned in industry-commissioned reports, such as the Cruise Line International Association (CLIA) study Wagner references.

Mega cruise ships are like floating cities that generate power and discharge waste on a scale far exceeding that of other vessels. A 2011 report by the U.S. Department of Transportation estimates that during a weeklong cruise, a ship carrying 3,000 passengers and crew generates approximately 210,000 gallons of sewage; 1 million gallons of gray water; 130 gallons of hazardous materials; up to 8 tons of solid waste; and 25,000 gallons of oily bilge water. The cruise industry is notorious for violating existing pollution regulations.

Princess Cruise Lines, which Wagner represents, received the largest ever maritime fine (\$40 million in 2016) for felony convictions stemming from deliberate vessel pollution, with corporate-level knowledge. It also violated its probation as recently as 2022 and was fined \$20 million.

Environmental concerns include atmospheric pollution and ocean acidification, toxic discharges from open loop exhaust scrubbers (currently banned in 120 ports), and wastewater discharges. Fine particles, sulfur oxides and nitrogen oxides found in cruise ship exhaust can cause asthma, emphysema and cancer.

Cruise ship waste streams and accidental pollution incidents are increasing in proportion to the burgeoning growth of the industry. Public health and environmental issues are serious and complex; for more detailed information, please visit Protect-Virginia.org.

Cruise companies constantly seek new markets for global expansion, and once established they fight vigorously to maintain and increase their presence. Communities pushing back against this exploitation include Key West, Florida; Charleston, South Carolina; Juneau and Sitka, Alaska; Seattle; Monterey Bay, California; Bar Harbor, Maine; Venice, Italy; Barcelona, Spain; Amsterdam; Marseilles, France; and Bergen, Norway. Each tells the same story: that their citizens had little input in the initial decision to bring in large cruise ships and little recourse after the fact, and that the cruise industry has brought them to the breaking point.

Virginians have an obligation not to take at face value cruise industry claims such as those put forward by Wagner. We should closely examine attempts to expand large cruise ship traffic in our waters with an eye toward negative environmental and cultural impacts as well as tax and labor issues. Under such scrutiny, we think the scale will tip toward utmost protection of our fragile ecosystems and coastal communities.

Angier Brock, Robert Hodson, Jacques van Montfrans and Elizabeth Wilkins, all of Yorktown, are members of the Protect Virginia Steering Committee. They wrote this on behalf of the organization.

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Column: Cruise traffic represents untapped potential for



The Carnival Legend docked at the Half Moore Cruise Center in Norfolk early Sunday morning, March 31, 2024. At 6:30AM passengers began to leave the ship and board waiting buses for a trip back to Baltimore. Bill Tieman/ For The Virginian-Pilot



By **FRANK WAGNER** | Guest Columnist
PUBLISHED: August 24, 2024 at 6:05 p.m.



Listen to this article



The Hampton Roads economy has always been based on three primary drivers: the military, the port and tourism.

The Virginia Tourism Corporation annual report for tourism has some very encouraging news for Virginians and our economy. In 2023, visitors spent \$33.3 billion with a total economic impact of \$50.6 billion. This spending supports more than 321,000 jobs and generates \$3.1 billion in state and local taxes.

What does \$3.1 billion in tax revenue equate to? To make up to \$3.1 billion in tax revenue, every household in Virginia would need to come up with another \$1,000 in taxes. So tourism is supporting hundreds of thousands of jobs and easing the tax burden on all Virginians.

The Virginia Tourism Corporation works tirelessly to draw additional tourists in Virginia, along with local government and tourism boards, Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown/Yorktown Foundation and other public and private groups. However, the overall headcount of tourists visiting Virginia was up only 3.2%. If Virginia is to build on our tourism successes, it must increase the numbers of visitors to our historic and beautiful state.

The VTC's annual report talks of airline flights and ground transport, but glides over one of the largest potential sources for new tourists, the cruise ship industry. In Virginia, Cruise Line International Association (CLIA), the trade association for the cruise industry, issues an annual report regarding the cruise industry. It details passenger count totals, passenger counts by cruise destinations, and industry spending and employment among a host of other data. Consider some of these facts: 50% more passengers went on cruises in 2023 than 2022, more than 30 million passengers went on cruises in 2023, and based on ship construction and itineraries, more than 40 million passengers will take cruises by 2027

And perhaps the most important fact of all: "More than 6 in 10 passengers say they have returned to a destination they first visited by cruise ship" The take away from this fact is, the more tourists that visit us by cruise ship, the more tourists will come back for a longer stay

While the Virginia Port Authority has done an excellent job increasing container shipments through our port and our shipyards are full to the brim, only Norfolk has shown any interest in attracting the cruise industry — and those investments have paid off. The Carnival Magic is now homeported in Norfolk and will return to Half Moone Cruise Center in 2025 when renovations are complete. This ensures that a steady stream of more than 3,000 tourists will show up in Norfolk every week to board the ship. Other cruise lines have also called on Norfolk for just a day visit, including Princess Cruise Lines and Royal Caribbean. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Given that we reside by one of the largest natural harbors in the world and that tourism remains one of the principal drivers of our economy, perhaps we need to take a much closer look at getting a larger share of the cruise ship industry. Norfolk has gone out on a limb and made a strategic investment that is starting to really pay off. The opportunity is much larger.

Due to the geography of our region, many of our region's major tourist attractions are located on the Peninsula (Colonial Williamsburg, Jamestown, Yorktown Battlefield and Victory Museum, Busch Gardens). Our current traffic situation precludes running buses from Norfolk to these locations, which opens up opportunities for cruise ships to call on Newport News or on the York River.

The cruise ship industry has shown a great deal of interest in providing historical themed cruise packages, and it is very interested in participating in Virginia's 250th celebration of our nation's independence. We should take advantage of this opportunity. A coordinated strategy between local leaders, local tourism authorities, the Virginia Tourism Corporation, and the Port Authority to market our port to the cruise industry will bear results. Cruise schedules are put together a year or two in advance. The time to act is now.

Does Virginia, with our wonderful cultural heritage and world's largest natural harbor, want to participate in one of the fastest growing industries in the world? Given the importance to our regional and state economy, we cannot afford not to.

Frank Wagner represented Virginia Beach in the General Assembly for 28 years. He spent his career in the maritime industry and works as a lobbyist for Princess Cruise Lines.