



# Center for Responsible Travel

*Transforming the Way the World Travels*

[www.responsibletravel.org](http://www.responsibletravel.org)

## **Tour Operators and Educational Travel Organizations' Petition to the U.S. Department of State, regarding Travel to Cuba March 1, 2018**

In early September 2017, the U.S. Department of State began a drawdown of staff in the U.S. Embassy in Havana, Cuba, which, after reports of Embassy employees being afflicted with health problems, resulted in a total 60 percent reduction in staff by September 29, 2017, and a Travel Warning against Cuba. That warning and, later, a Level 3, or "reconsider travel," advisory resulted in a sharp decline in U.S. visitors to Cuba. This despite the fact that there are no confirmed reports of any of the almost 700,000 civilian U.S. visitors to the island nation in 2017 experiencing health problems similar to Embassy employees.

Whereas the State Department is scheduled to decide on whether or not to re-staff the U.S. Embassy in Havana on March 4, 2018, we, the undersigned, request that the Department re-staff the U.S. Embassy in Havana and change Cuba's travel advisory from a Level 3, or "reconsider travel," to at least a less intimidating Level 2, or "exercise increased caution."

Greg Belanger  
President  
Ocean Passages

Michael Eizenberg  
President  
Educational Travel Alliance

Johann Besserer  
Executive Director  
Intercultural Outreach Initiative

Malia Everette  
CEO  
AltruVistas

Reid Callanan  
Director  
Santa Fe Photographic Workshops

Peggy M. Goldman  
President  
Friendly Planet Travel

Dominique Callimanopulos  
President  
Elevate Destinations

Michele Gran  
Co-founder and Senior Vice President  
Global Volunteers

Karin Eckhard  
CEO & Co-founder  
Espíritu Travel, LLC

Bob Guild  
Co-coordinator  
Responsible and Ethical Cuba Travel (RESPECT)

Kendra Guild  
Director  
Marazul Charters, Inc.

John Haffner  
President  
Cuba Trade and Travel

Marcel Hatch  
President  
Cuba Explorer Tours

Richard Hobbs, Esq.  
Executive Director  
Human Agenda

Andrea Holbrook  
President and CEO  
Holbrook Travel, Inc.

Martha Honey, Ph.D.  
Cofounder & Executive Director  
Center for Responsible Travel (CREST)

Adriana Isaza-Mohring  
Founder  
Elite Tennis Travel

Tor D. Jensen  
President  
Jensen World Travel, Ltd.

Gabrielle Jorgensen  
Director of Public Policy  
Engage Cuba

Collin Lavery  
President  
Cuba Educational Travel

Lee Marona & Aja C. Napolis  
President & Administrative Coordinator  
Vaya Sojourns, Inc.

John McAuliff  
Executive Director & Founder  
The Fund for Reconciliation and Development

Janet Moore  
President  
Distant Horizons

Zachary Moses  
Vice President  
Hanns Ebensten Travel Inc.

Tom Popper  
President  
insightCuba

Bill Robison  
Director of Expedition Development  
Lindblad Expeditions

Melisa Riviere, Ph.D.  
President  
Son Dos Alas: Cultural and Educational Travel

Shabnam Samoohi  
President  
Cultural Island Travel

Peter Sanchez  
CEO  
Cuba Tours and Travel

Kate Simpson  
President  
Academic Travel Abroad, Inc.

Mark J. Spalding  
President  
The Ocean Foundation

Ned Sublette  
Founder & President  
Postmambo Studies

Kristen Tripp  
Program Director – Cuba  
Yellow Dog Flyfishing Adventures