



Center for Responsible Travel

Transforming the Way the World Travels

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