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Florida Attorney General's Office News Release

AG Moody Sues Federal Gov't as Cruise Industry Stays Docked



TALLAHASSEE, Fla.—Attorney General Ashley Moody today filed legal action against the Biden administration and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention over the outdated federal shutdown order of the nation's cruise industry. As COVID-19 vaccine distribution continues to increase at a rapid pace under Governor Ron DeSantis's leadership, airlines, hotels, restaurants, theme parks and other tourism industries are now open with reasonable safety measures. Yet, the cruise industry remains under a strict federal shutdown order—harming the national economy and Florida's travel industry along with its workers.

Attorney General Ashley Moody said, "Cruises are a vital part of Florida's tourism industry—employing thousands and boosting our state's economy. Every day the federal government unfairly keeps this economic giant docked, our economy suffers. The ripple effect of this misguided federal lockdown has far-reaching implications for the cruise industry, international tourism, businesses that would benefit from the influx of visitors, our state's economy and the thousands of Floridians who work in the industry.

"But what is even worse than the economic damage caused by this heavy-handed federal overreach is the precedent being set by an eager-to-regulate Biden administration that is unfairly singling out and keeping docked our cruise industry on the basis of outdated data. Our litigation seeks to end this federal overreach and allow Floridians to safely get back to work and travel."

Governor Ron DeSantis said, “We must allow our cruise liners and their employees to get back to work and safely set sail again. To be clear, no federal law authorizes the CDC to indefinitely impose a nationwide shutdown of an entire industry. This lawsuit is necessary to protect Floridians from the federal government’s overreach and resulting economic harm to our state.”

In October 2020, the CDC expressly found that continuing this nationwide lockdown was unjustifiable. Since that time, the CDC has functionally continued the lockdown and it appears the federal lockdown will continue for the foreseeable future, even though vaccines will soon be available to all adults nationwide.

According to Attorney General Moody’s complaint, filed Thursday in the U.S. District Court for the Middle District of Florida, the CDC does not have the authority to issue year-and-a-half-long nationwide lockdowns of entire industries. Florida’s complaint also contends the CDC’s actions are arbitrary and capricious and otherwise violate the Administrative Procedure Act.

The complaint asks the court to set aside the CDC’s actions and compel it to allow cruises to operate with the reasonable safety protocols that have been successful in other countries that now operate cruises. According to the complaint, absent court intervention, Florida will lose hundreds of millions of dollars, if not billions. More importantly, the approximately 159,000 hard-working Floridians whose livelihoods depend on the cruise industry could lose everything.

To view the complaint, click here.