

## Caribbean Hotel Association reacts to US passport legislation

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Peter J. Odle, president of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), conveyed his alarm and concern for the consequences of the arbitrary omission of air travel in the extension of the Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative (WHTI), which only applies to travel by land and sea.

The CHA Head cautioned that the Caribbean countries affected stood to face a genuine economic and social upheaval, caused by the inevitable shift in travel by US citizens.

'Tourism is the lifeline of the Caribbean, where the industry spans the depth and breadth of the national economies and represents as high as 97% of all direct and indirect jobs in the country. For the Caribbean nations affected, the economic impact has the potential to be disastrous,' stated Odle, adding: 'We fully concur with our public sector partner CTO in their statement equating this piece of legislation with a category 6 hurricane for the Caribbean hotel and tourism industry,' he added.

CHA has maintained that any postponement of the WHTI implementation should apply equally to all countries involved and equally to travel by land, air, and sea, and that no country or industry should be disadvantaged arbitrarily to the economic advantage of any other sector.

The Caribbean Hotel Association represents the entire spectrum of hospitality industry's private sector, representing from the small guest houses to the mega-resorts across 35 national hotel associations, to allied members including airline executives, tour operators, travel agents, trade and consumer press, hotel and restaurant suppliers, and others. CHA's mission is to optimize the full potential of the Caribbean hotel & tourism industry by serving member needs & building partnerships.

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