

Dear Mr. Fain and Mr. Del Rio;

I would imagine that you both are familiar with the organization writing this letter to you today, International Cruise Victims, Inc. (ICV). Most of the members of ICV have sailed on your ships over the years, innocently believing we were headed for what your ads promised would be the vacation of a lifetime. Indeed, we did experience “vacations of a lifetime” each of us, but they were nothing like what we saw in your brochures; in fact, they all involved real events that you desperately try to keep away from the media and out of the public eye. Hopefully, the majority of people who take a cruise will never experience what we did; the sexual assaults, the inadequate medical care, or the loss of a loved one due to fires, overboard incidents, murder, over consumption of alcohol, illness, and the list goes on. However, that is exactly why our organization exists—we believe you and your companies should be held accountable when the public is harmed.

Recently, you issued a highly predictable announcement that a panel of experts, now on your payroll, is poised to produce the best available public health measures and protocol in order for cruising to safely resume. But given the duplicitous history of the cruise industry, no one should be willing to buy your promise of certain safety without stepping back and taking a critical look at what this panel produces. As an organization made up of victims, passengers, and crew, in over 40 countries around the world, ICV is the collaborative voice of advocacy, education, and awareness, which positions us as a well-informed bridge between your industry and your passengers. In light of that, we request that ICV be included on your panel of experts. Will you, Mr. Fain and Mr. Del Rio, make a place for ICV on your healthy sail team?

Now is the time for your industry to reprioritize its foundational principles and priorities. The idea of taking care of your passengers and crew members health and your own wealth, is not a mutually exclusive one. Given that we have all seen the alarming uptick in COVID-19 cases coming from the reopening of bars, restaurants, casinos, and other crowded spaces on land, the public will require strict and stringent standards for future safety on cruise ships. We have sincere concerns that your priorities might be in conflict with the health and safety of the public. Your acceptance of our offer to serve on your panel would be a testament to your level of commitment and a way to allay many public concerns for passenger and crew safety.

You have boasted that the cruise industry “pushes the bar in adding features that have never been on ships before.” Instead, why not be inspired to sincerely push the bar by adding safety features and oversight that have never been on ships before? Provide your passengers with a true sense of security rather than a false sense of it. ICV is looking forward to hearing from you with an offer to be included in your rulemaking so that we may be witness to the cruising public that your safety claims are sincere and bona fide.

Sincerely,

The Reverend Jamie Barnett

President - International Cruise Victims, Inc.