

Proposed New Cruise Ship Caps for Bar Harbor

A path to significant reductions through compromise



BACKGROUND

Bar Harbor currently has two mechanisms for managing cruise ship tourism:

1. A Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document issued by the harbormaster that has evolved since the 1990s with the help of the cruise ship committee
2. A daily passenger cap that has been in place since 2008, reached in collaboration with the cruise industry (more on these current caps below)

Following a community survey on cruise tourism conducted in spring of 2021, Town Council began pursuing options to reduce cruise visitation. After meeting with a maritime attorney in January of 2022, it became clear that, legally, a municipality has limited, if any, authority to regulate cruise ships because the federal government is the primary regulatory authority. Council determined that the best option was to work with the industry to modify the schedule for 2023 and beyond.

CRUISE SHIP WORKING GROUP FORMED

In February 2022, Town Council voted unanimously to authorize the Town Manager to form a special cruise ship working group. The purpose of this working group was to meet with industry representatives to negotiate a solution for meaningful reductions to Bar Harbor's cruise visitation, especially in September and October.



RESULTS

The result of this process is a negotiated agreement with Cruise Lines International Association¹ for lower daily passenger caps for May, June, September and October, and for the introduction of a new monthly passenger cap, as summarized below.²

New Monthly Caps

May and June – 30k each
July and August – 40k each
Sept and Oct – 65k each

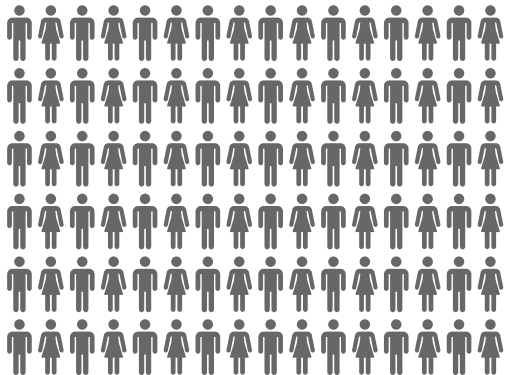
Reduced Daily Caps

May and June: 3,800
July and August: 3,500
Sept and Oct: 3,800

*Compare to current caps, in place since 2008:
May and June: 5,500 | July and Aug: 3,500 | Sept and Oct: 5,500*

EXAMPLE OF SEPTEMBER 2022: What would the Proposed Caps Change?

Current Passenger Caps



vs.

31%
Reduction in
Passengers

Proposed Passenger Caps



As well as:

4

**Days
without ships**
(vs. 3 under
current caps)

11

**Days with
fewer total
passengers**

2,153

**Average passenger
count per day**
(approximately a 1k reduction
vs. current caps)

64,640

**Total
passengers**
(vs. 94,020 under
current caps)

¹ CLIA is the trade association representing the vast majority of all cruise lines that call in Maine.

² For additional information, please see the town manager's presentation to council on August 2, 2022, which can be found at <http://barharbormaine.gov/DocumentCenter/View/6276/10D-Handout-Cruise-Working-Group-8-2-2022>.