

What Does Bar Harbor's New Cruise Management Plan Do?

In August of 2022, Bar Harbor's town council endorsed a new cruise management plan that will be implemented beginning with the 2023 season. This plan was created in response to a town survey conducted in 2021, and importantly, it is the result of extensive negotiation with the cruise industry to achieve significant reductions in cruise visitation.

The Cruise Management Plan is a holistic approach to tourism management which includes:

- Lower daily and new monthly passenger caps.
- No more ships over 4,000 passengers.
- Memoranda of Agreement (MOAs) - signed annually with each visiting cruise line.
- Standard Operating Procedures for cruise operations - reviewed annually.
- Shoreside vendor ordinance - to be developed over the winter months.
- Annual review and evaluation - with adjustments to the MOAs as necessary.



What Would Warrant Article #3 Do?

Proposed Limitation

1,000 people (passengers and crew) disembarking per day, excepting ships booked before July 18, 2021.

Regulatory Mechanism

Land Use Ordinance, to be administered by the harbormaster and the code enforcement officer.

Status

The measure will be on the ballot in November as Warrant Article #3. Per Bar Harbor's town charter, it will be noted beneath the Article language that the Warrant Committee opposes the referendum 9-6 and that the Planning Board opposes it 7-0.

See the official language here: <https://tinyurl.com/2p9cvexd>

Implications if Passed

95% of current passengers arrive on ships with a capacity for more than 1,000. Cruise lines would be unlikely to bring these larger ships to Bar Harbor. As a result, the net effect of this referendum would be to eliminate 95% of current passenger counts. The remaining 5% come on small ships that will likely continue to arrive.

Economic Impacts

- Using figures from research conducted by UMaine Orono in 2016 and CruiseMaine in 2018, the loss of passenger and crew spending will be between \$20 and 30 million/year for MDI businesses.
- The town would lose nearly \$1 million/year in cruise ship fees.
- Cruise ships make up nearly half of the workload that pays for the "Pilotage System" that benefits Frenchman Bay and Penobscot Bay. If there is a significant decrease in cruise ship visits, it would have trickle down effects that would impact the service provided by the pilots.

By the Numbers

Passenger Counts by Day and by Month

COMPARISON OF SEPTEMBER 2022

