



CARIBBEAN
HOTEL
ASSOCIATION

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**CHA: TEMPORARY LIFT OF US PASSPORT REQUIREMENT ENCOURAGING,
BUT INSUFFICIENT**

~ Caribbean Hotel Association reiterates damage to Caribbean economies ~

MIAMI, Florida (June 18, 2007) – Peter J. Odle, President of the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), responded with a mixed view to the announcement by the US State Department of the temporary relaxation of passport requirements for some American citizens returning from trips to the Caribbean, Canada and Mexico. “The measure is positive for the thousands of travelers whose plans were threatened by the backlog of passport applications,” he said, adding “but it doesn’t go far enough.”

The CHA President referred to the economic impact study that CHA commissioned in 2005, which considered the market share of visitors from the United States to the Caribbean and the percentage of those visitors that do not use a valid US passport - and concluded that in the Caribbean, as much as US\$2.6 billion of visitor export earnings and more than 188,000 Travel & Tourism jobs would be at risk. “Unfortunately, the impact has been felt, with hotels and destinations reporting a downturn in visitors during what should be the high season of Caribbean tourism. More importantly, the decrease in business directly affects the social and economic wellbeing of small business and the people of the Caribbean who depend on tourism for their livelihood.”

Echoing the statements of the Caribbean Tourism Organization, CHA President Peter Odle reaffirmed that the organization favors an extension for the Caribbean to coincide with full implementation of the new passport rules in 2009. “The imminent requirement at border crossings and arrivals by sea in January 2008 will only increase the backlog of passport applications – not to mention the confusion that the disparate requirements and deadlines are causing among US citizens. The US Congress established June 2009 as the deadline to apply the security requirements fully; why not make use of this time to ensure that the systems in place are adequate to the task?,” concluded Odle.

The impact study is available online at
www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com/default/WTTCPassportStudy05.pdf

About the Caribbean Hotel Association – www.caribbeanhotelassociation.com

CHA aims to optimize the full potential of the Caribbean hotel & tourism industry by serving member needs & building partnerships. The members of CHA represent the entire spectrum of the hospitality industry’s private sector. Some 849 member hotels in 36 national hotel associations represent approximately 125,476 rooms in the Caribbean, from the small guest houses to the mega-resorts. The allied members: airlines, tour wholesalers and travel agents, trade and consumer press, advertising and public relations agencies, and hotel and restaurants suppliers, among many, account for more than 536 members. Altogether, they are the hospitality industry of the Caribbean, and CHA is their voice.