

Rep. Don Young working on workaround to Canada's cruise ship ban

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A passenger stands on the dock in Juneau near the Ovation of the Seas cruise ship, May 19, 2019. (Photo by Ryan Cunningham/KTOO)

U.S. Rep. Don Young introduced legislation on Wednesday that aims to allow large cruise ships to return to Alaska this summer.

Earlier this month, [Canada extended a prohibition on cruise tourism](#) to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. The decision effectively canceled Alaska's cruise season because of the Passenger Vessel Services Act — a

U.S. maritime law that requires large, foreign-flagged cruise ships to stop in Canada when traveling between Washington and Alaska.

Young's legislation, called the Alaska Tourism Recovery Act, proposes a temporary workaround that would make roundtrip voyages between Alaska and Washington a foreign voyage under U.S. law. It would only apply for the duration of Canada's cruise prohibition.

[In a press release](#), Young wrote that the pandemic devastated Alaska's cruise season last year and his bill would provide relief and certainty to communities that depend on tourism.

The Passenger Vessel Services Act isn't the only hurdle that cruise lines must face before returning to Alaska. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will require all ships to meet certain conditions and complete a mock sailing to test COVID-19 protocols before returning to service.

The CDC is also still recommending that people [completely avoid cruise ship travel](#) while the risk of getting COVID-19 is very high.