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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chamber supports lifting indoor mask mandate/easing travel restrictions

The Chamber of Commerce supports lifting the indoor mask mandate for all retail establishments due to the level of vaccinations administered in our community and the relatively low hospitalization and infection rates since the reopening of our borders to visitors. The Chamber is appealing to Cabinet to make the change when they update the public health regulations at the end of the month. The current regulations require all individuals to wear a mask indoors unless the person is unable to wear a mask or cloth face covering due to a medical condition or the person is exempted by guidance provided by the medical officer of health. People sitting at desks at work, school and customers in restaurant or bar sitting at a table or counter do not need to wear a mask or face covering.

"It is time to move to the next phase of the reopening plan. Removing the indoor mask mandate for businesses and simplifying travel restrictions is the natural next step," says Shomari Scott, President of the Chamber. "At present and based on the science, the level of vaccinations administered in our community and the relatively low hospitalization and infection rate since reopening our borders to visitors is a clear sign that we are ready to reclaim our position as a premier tourism destination and restore a marquee industry that is the lifeblood for many small and micro businesses."

In March restrictions on travelers from countries with a vaccination rate lower than 60% for the first dose of an approved vaccine was removed. Any vaccinated person can now travel to the Islands without being subject to quarantine on arrival with a pre-arrival test, complete a medical questionnaire, take a medical exam if a Customs and Border Control officer considers it necessary, submit a travel declaration form and have evidence to support it.

The Jamaica Tourist Board dropped its indoor mask mandate on Friday, 15th April, and many other popular tourism destinations such as Aruba and Puerto Rico are relaxing pre-departure and PCR COVID-19 testing requirements before summer which will be a breath of fresh air for the travelling public. Mask mandates on public transportation systems in the United States have also been dropped.

"Lifting restrictions at this point and time based on limited hospitalizations will make it easier to travel to Cayman and will help us to continue to restore our tourism product to improve our economy," said Scott. "The longer we wait to lift the restrictions and regulations the longer it will take for our islands to fully recover."

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION CONTACT:

Wil Pineau, CCE, Cert. Hon.
925-8980