

■ Caribbean tourism stakeholders urge US:

Explore alternatives to tariffs

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THE Caribbean Hotel and Tourism Association (CHTA), has called on the United States to consider alternative measures to imposing tariffs and port fees on Caribbean destinations, noting the 'considerable mutual benefits that tourism brings to both the Caribbean and the United States, particularly Florida'.

The CHTA said that it is advocating for modifications to the port-related policies currently under consideration, and is calling for a new approach to strengthen and safeguard the two-way ties in trade and travel between the region and the United States. President Donald Trump last Wednesday announced far-reaching new tariffs on nearly all US trading partners ranging from a 34% tax on imports from China and 20% on the European Union, among others, in a move economists and other traders say is designed to dismantle much of the architecture of the global economy and trigger broader trade wars.

In the case of the Caribbean, Trump announced a 10% tariff on most regional countries, while in the case of Guyana, the tariff is as high as 38%.

The US president also announced plans to impose a US\$1-\$1.5 million levy on all Chinese-made ships entering US harbours.

In a statement, the CHTA, which describes itself as the region's leading association representing private-sector tourism interests, cited its recent submission to the US Trade Representative (USTR) and other US officials in response to a call for comments regarding proposed port service fees.

'The organisation argues that these fees, coupled with tariffs, will significantly increase the cost of imports, raising costs for both land and cruise travellers, and ultimately reduce traveller demand and spending.'

The CHTA said while acknowledging Washington's intention to expand the use of US-built cargo vessels, it is warning of the policy's 'unintended consequences, particularly its timing'.

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