



YSATT

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Newsletter February 2021

Note to Members

Hello Members, we are now at the end of February and I do hope you are all holding up despite our current state in the industry. A lot of correspondence, media releases and interviews has been done this month in the hopes of getting the relevant Ministers to hear us and grant exemptions to our customers.

Update

A committee meeting was held on the 28th January and our board discussed how we would move forward in having our voice heard by the Government to grant exemptions to our customers.

Yachting industry pleads: Treat us like the manufacturing sector

Andrea Perez-Sobers
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THE YACHTING services industry is appealing to the Government to treat visiting yachties in the same way that the manufacturing sector is treated, in terms of exemptions granted for entry by foreigners.

In a statement yesterday, the body representing the yachting industry drew attention to exemptions granted to bottled water manufacturer Blue Waters to allow 39 workers from Honduras to enter Trinidad and Tobago last week.

The Government came under fire from the Opposition for allowing the foreigners to enter and leaving thousands of citizens "stranded" abroad.

In response last week, National Security Minister Stuart Young referred to a "request by a manufacturer to bring in specialised workers to upgrade their plant. This is not unusual or unique. The persons entering would have presented their negative PCR tests, they will be paying for their quarantine at a State-supervised quarantine facility and I add that many manufacturers outside of the oil and gas sector have had similar requests, which have been granted".

The Yacht Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago president Peter Peake told the *Express* yesterday that the industry has been struggling to keep afloat as yachts have not been granted exemptions to enter Trinidad unlike other Caribbean countries. In some countries in the region, yachts are allowed to move freely in and out of the islands under strict protocols.

"The yacht services sector in Trinidad operates as a direct foreign exchange-earning industry; this income is being lost. There are many yachts owned by international customers that are in storage in Trinidad. These customers are being barred from entry to return to their property as well as those who would like to sail to conduct much-needed work and repairs," Peake said.

On Wednesday 3rd February, Jesse and Peter did an interview on Power 102.1 FM highlighting our plight in the industry. A letter was sent out to the

Prime Minister on the 5th February, the subject being "TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO YACHT SERVICES SECTOR IS ON THE BRINK OF COLLAPSE". Also, a cover letter and all our approval letters and letters to the Ministers were sent to various Associations, TTSA, AMCHAM, TTCOC, TTMA and TTCA. On the 5th and 6th February a press release was sent out to the media houses, the articles below were posted in the papers.



No entry to client yachting faces closure

The yachting industry has been crippled by the travel restrictions imposed on foreign visitors to combat the covid19 pandemic and over 2,000 people who earn a living from boat repairs and other associated services could become jobless, according to the Yacht Services Association of TT.

In a statement, the association said the yachting "industry is now at a grave crossroad" and warned that if government did not reconsider its position to grant exemptions to yachties "all will be lost."

Yachties, like other foreign nationals, were debarred from coming into TT freely since mid-March last year when the country's borders were shut to prevent a possible outbreak of covid19.

"Since this global pandemic and our borders closed, the yacht services industry has been struggling to keep afloat as yachts have not been granted exemptions to enter Trinidad unlike our neighbours, where yachts are moving freely in and out of the islands, of course, under strict protocol. Among the yachting community in the Caribbean there have been no reported cases of covid infection or transmission," the association said.

The statement referred to the exemptions granted to the energy and manufacturing sector for specialised workers to travel to TT as questioned why there has been no response to correspondence seeking a safe re-opening of the yachting industry, which has sprouted numerous ship repair yards in Chaguaramas.

"The yacht services sector in Trinidad is world class and operates as a direct foreign exchange earning industry; this income is being lost. The jobs and quality/variety of services provided by our yacht service workers in Trinidad cannot be found anywhere else in the Caribbean. There are many yachts owned by international customers that are in storage in Trinidad. These customers are being barred from entry to return to their property as well as those who would like to sail to Trinidad to conduct much needed work and repairs," the statement said.

The association said in August last year, it had submitted a proposal for the safe reopening of the industry to the chief medical officer which was approved as it satisfied the scientific requirements requested by the government but have not yet received an update.

In its most recent correspondence, the association wrote to the minister of national security requesting possible exemptions for yachties to return but have not had any response.

The ministry has prioritised returning nationals to seek exemptions to return to this country and they now have to fill an online application to seek approval from the ministry.

On the 10th February a TV6 Interview was done with Mckensie, Carlos and Jesse on the morning show again stressing the need for exemptions to be granted before March 2021 as the Industry will be lost to our neighbouring islands who have been welcoming our clients into their waters.

Young: No commitment on exemptions for yachties

Andrea Perez-Sobers

NATIONAL SECURITY Minister Stuart Young says he is unable to give a commitment on whether the appeal by the yacht services industry, for foreign yachts to be granted an exemption to enter Trinidad and Tobago waters, will be approved.

The Yacht Services Association of Trinidad and Tobago (YSATT) over the past four months has been begging for the foreign yachts to be allowed into T&T waters, as the industry has been struggling to keep afloat.

YSATT stated that letters were sent last year and last month to Young for requesting possible exemptions or facilitation for cruisers needing to return to Trinidad. They got no official response on the matter.

At a news conference yesterday, Young said the situation is being looked at as this country's borders remain closed.

"What YSATT is requesting is for the exemptions of foreigners to come in so the whole logistics of quarantining has to be looked at in the coming weeks on whether the request can be accommodated. I will also meet with them in

the coming weeks, but I cannot give a commitment that the exemptions will be granted," Young said.

In an immediate response, YSATT president Peter Peake said he was disheartened to hear of Young's inability to show any level of commitment as the situation is becoming dire in the industry.

"Just this past Sunday, Massy Stores shuttered its outlet in Chaguaramas, which is a significant blow to the economic activity in the area. This one closure is emblematic of the broader situation and other smaller business closures."

Peake added that YSATT will be writing to National Security, Health and Ministry of Trade and Investment today, to outline once again the protocols that have been drafted for a safe reopening of the industry.

"I want to also point out that if the yachties are granted exemption, they will be quarantining on their boats, which would not cost the Government one red cent. The yachties will actually bring foreign exchange revenue, something that the country is in dire need of," Peake said.



On the 18th February, three letters were sent out to the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Trade and Industry and Ministry of National Security, the subject being “TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO YACHT SERVICES SECTOR – APPEAL FOR MEETING RE: PROTOCOL FOR INTERNATIONAL YACHT ARRIVALS.”

On 19th Jesse and Carlos attended an interview with Power 102FM this time with “Skippy”, again highlighting the need for exemptions to be granted to our customers as time is running out for us.

On the 22nd February, a zoom meeting was held with Mr. Rajiv Diptee, the President of the Supermarket’s Association. Jesse and Peter attended and Mr. Diptee said he will look at a way in which he can integrate us in his cause and also that he can provide an audience with Minister Young.

On 23rd February Jesse met with TTCSI and some persons from the Ministry of Finance to discuss three main issues facing our industry. Jesse pointed out the three main issues presently is of course the border closure, the single harmonized form and Customs and Excise. He noted that they will try to get an audience with Mr. Young for us.

Mr. Otto Carrington of CNC 3 visited us on Wednesday 23rd and did a live interview with some of the workers here at PowerBoats. After this interview was done on the 25th February Peter received calls from the Honourable Terrance Deyalsingh and Ms. Paula Gopee-Scoon. Peter said that Mr. Deyalsingh confirmed our matter is now in the hands of the Minister of National Security from whom we are still awaiting word.



As we now approach March, we will still continue to lobby for an answer from the Honourable Minister of National Security as to safely reopening our industry to our customers. Our Board Meeting was held last Thursday and this was discussed.

YSATT Facebook and Instagram

Members, if you have anything that you wish to share on our Instagram and Facebook pages or our website please send it in via email to us and we will post it. Remember our website and social media pages are designed to facilitate and help you, so I do urge you to take advantage of it.

We are grateful for the support of the marine services and boating communities on social media. It has aided us in spreading relevant information. Thank you again for your continued support.

Covid protocol

Please make sure to adhere to the covid protocols – washing of hands, sanitize and mask wearing for customers. If the Ministry of Health sends their people to check on us we want to make sure we have it all in place. If you need signs please call the office and we will arrange to get them to you.



Membership Fees

Membership fees for the first quarter will become due at the end of March. You can now pay via direct deposit as our banking information is now on the invoice. For those who wish to pay the full year membership please contact me at the office and I will adjust the invoice.

YSATT is committed to serving our members and customers as always, please feel free to call or come in to our office I am at the office from 8:00AM to 4:00PM Monday to Friday.

We thank you for your continued support!

