



City of  
**Panama City Beach**

**Office of the Mayor**

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May 8, 2020

The Honorable Ron DeSantis  
Governor of Florida  
400 S. Monroe St.  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-0001

Dear Governor DeSantis:

I am writing in strong support of allowing vacation rentals in Panama City Beach.

Since the beginning of this crisis, we have carefully followed guidance from your office, the Department of Health, the Center for Disease Control and the White House. Under that guidance, the City Council of Panama City Beach took extraordinary action to reduce the spread of COVID-19.

As our curve flattened, the City Council opened its beautiful beaches on May 1. Following strict safety standards set by the City Council, the visitors eagerly returned. Fortunately, this has not brought about an increase in positive COVID-19 cases. Having slowly and safely welcomed many of our visitors back into our City, I am committed to keeping our residents and guests safe and continue to monitor this situation closely.

As the largest City in Florida without an ad valorem tax, our vital public services rely on tourism dollars. Having our 7,789 licensed short-term rentals closed drastically effects City services, our local economy, particularly our small businesses and both local and out-of-state condo and rental owners. Small business is the lifeblood of our 14,000-resident community.

I appreciate your leadership in guiding us through this pandemic and as mayor, I would humbly request you reopen vacation rentals in Panama City Beach.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Mark Sheldon".

Mark Sheldon, Mayor  
City of Panama City Beach