

Cruise

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told the Port Commission. Will Isom, the port's executive director, said he was caught off guard by the length of the cruise ship ban in Canada, but that things can change quickly.

"I think there's a potential that with the vaccine rollout and other precautions that may be put in place, that that window may become shorter," he said. "But again, it's hard to project. There's a lot unknown moving forward."



ing three-quarters of the Port's river cruise revenue.

"If the restrictions get lifted, I think we'll have reservations come in pretty quickly," Transue said. "But at this point, with the way the situation is, I think we're pretty much going to stay at this point until that changes."

Isom pointed to the chal-

Coding

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Samaira later realized that her experience was common for people new to coding. They "start with the hardest problems first, and that intimidates them." That's why it's so important to begin by learning the basic concepts, she said. with her friends, she saw their attitudes about computer science begin to change.

"They were starting to think of it as something they could enjoy," she said.

After creating CoderBunnyz, Samaira wanted to teach more kids about coding. She asked libraries about hosting workshops, but because she was so

'All potential avenues'

Alaska's congressional delegation derided the length of Canada's ban, calling it unacceptable.

^{*}Upon hearing the announcement, we immediately reached out to Canadian and American agencies to try to understand the rationale behind this decision — particularly the duration of the ban," U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, U.S. Sen. Dan Sullivan and U.S. Rep. Don Young, Alaska Republicans, said in a joint statement. "We are exploring all potential avenues, including changing existing laws, to ensure the cruise industry in Alaska resumes operations as The Astorian

American Cruise Lines' Columbia River fleet — including Queen of the West, American Pride, American Song and American Harmony — has homeported at North Tongue Point while the cruise season remains in flux because of the coronavirus.

soon as it is safe. We will fight to find a path forward."

Bruce Conner, the port's cruise ship marketer, said he understands Canada's decision. But he said it's too soon to say whether there will be a cruise ship season this year.

"I believe there are some options out there that we are going to be able to, for fall especially, find solutions for the Canadian government to amend its decision," he said.

Conner said lawmakers from Alaska and Washington state are working with Cruise Lines International Association, a trade association, to find compromises, such as waivers to the federal Passenger Vessel Services Act requiring visits to foreign ports by foreign-flagged vessels.

The association said there have been more than 200 sailings in Europe and Asia with enhanced safety measures. Cruise companies have agreed to require testing, masks and physical distancing and quarantine crews prior to trips.

River cruises

The port was also supposed to make more than \$118,000 from 37 smaller river cruise vessels docking at Pier 2. But American Queen Steamboat Co. canceled 29 of 34 visits by its ship, the American Empress, to Pier 2 this year, eraslenges river cruise ships face operating in several counties along Oregon and Washington state, often in different stages of government restrictions.

"I think that could be a challenge as we move forward as well. Some jurisdictions are going to be farther ahead, as far as the vaccination process and the level of virus outbreak in those communities," he said. "That's obviously going to impact the ability of ports to host a vessel. And along with that, it's hard to plan around."

Conner said the port, Oregon, Washington and other ports upriver are planning to discuss how to approach the river cruise season this spring. He said river cruise companies are hoping to be in a lower risk category than oceangoing vessels because all their vessels carry fewer than 250 people.

Grocery

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"Apparently we are not front-line workers when it comes to getting the vaccine. That was kind of a shock," said Dawn Hand, who works at a Kroger supermarket in Houston, where she said three of her co-workers were out with the virus last week. She watches others getting vaccinated at the in-store pharmacy without knowing when she'll get her turn.

Texas is among several states that have decided to leave grocery and other essential workers out of the second phase of its vaccination effort, instead prioritizing adults over 65 and people with chronic medical conditions.

Focusing on older adults is

an approach many epidemiologists support as the most ethical and efficient because it will help reduce deaths and hospitalizations faster. People over 65 account for 80% of deaths in the country, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease and Control Prevention.

"Our main goals with vaccines should be reducing deaths and hospitalizations," said William Moss, executive director of the International Vaccine Center at Johns Hopkins University School of Public Health. "In order to do that, we need to begin vaccinating those at the highest risks."

But many grocery workers have been surprised and disheartened to find that they've been left out of such policies, in part because a CDC panel had raised their expectations by recommending the second phase of the vaccine rollout — 1B — include grocery and other essential employees.

Even when grocery workers are prioritized, they still face long waits. New York opened up vaccines to grocery workers in early January, along with other essential employees and anyone 65 and over. But limited supply makes booking an appointment difficult, even more so for the workers who don't have large companies or unions to advocate for them.

Only 13 states are currently allowing grocery workers to sign up for vaccines, according to the United Food and Commercial Workers union, which represents 1.3 million U.S. grocery, meatpacking and other front-line workers.

Some states are still working through an initial phase that prioritizes health workers and nursing home residents. Many states have divided the second phase into tiers that put grocery workers lower than others, including people 65 and over, teachers and first responders. Eleven states have no clear plan for prioritizing grocery workers at all, according to research from United 4 Respect, a labor group that advocates for workers at Walmart, Amazon and other major retailers.

Óregon has not made grocery or other essential workers outside of health care settings a priority, adding them into a future category with the general population and those of all ages with underlying conditions. With her father's encouragement, Samaira started again. Eventually she was able to create the app, which features a disappearing on-screen button. "That brought me a lot of joy," said Samaira, who lives in Santa Clara, California.

When Samaira told her friends about her love of coding and encouraged them to try it, they weren't interested. Coding was "scary" and "boring," they said.

But Samaira was determined to change their minds. She asked her friends what they loved. Their answer? Games.

"Maybe I could put this coding thing into a board game," she recalled thinking, "and somehow make it fun for my friends."

She began to sketch ideas for a game featuring a bunny that travels through a maze to eat a carrot. In 2016, with support from her parents and after a lot of trial and error with designers, Samaira introduced Coder-Bunnyz, her first board game. As Samaira shared the game

Taxis

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Hwang is leading the research team, which includes UCSD engineer Shirley Meng, one of the nation's foremost battery experts, as well as collaborators from San Diego State University, UC Davis, Brigham Young University, Aurora Flight Sciences and M4 Engineering.

Interest in urban air mobility has waxed and waned over the years. It's been on the upswing lately; United Airlines announced last week that it would buy 200 vertical takeoff-and-landing aircraft from Archer in a deal that could be worth up to \$1 billion. Toyota young, "getting people to agree to do things with me was a huge challenge," she said.

With time and persistence, Samaira found people who believed in her. She began leading workshops and developed a successful track record.

Samaira invented two more coding board games: Coder-Mindz, which focuses on artificial intelligence, and CoderMarz, which shares facts about Mars and space. She also launched the "Yes, 1 Billion Kids Can Code" initiative to donate educational resources to children around the world.

During the coronavirus pandemic, Samaira created Boss Biz, an online program that teaches kids how to start their own business. About 200 people have participated.

Whatever you choose to do in life, having a basic coding understanding will help you succeed, said Samaira. "It gives us that mind-set that we can take any situation, analyze it, and come up with the best potential solution."

and Airbus also are investing in the field.

Ken Moelis, CEO of the investment bank Moelis and Co., told CNBC that creating aircraft involves essentially refining what has already be done with helicopters. People are "adding the word electric to it ... The technology exists. There's nothing to invent."

But UCSD's new NASA grant expresses a different outlook, saying that engineers are going to have to do everything from improving vertical takeoff-and-landing battery technology to making the taxis quieter than helicopters and ensure that they won't suffer catastrophic problems while flying over urban areas.