



# City of Panama City Beach

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To Whom it May Concern,

We, the City Council of the City of Panama City Beach, write on behalf of the residents and visitors of Panama City Beach to encourage transparency and fair treatment of your guests.

As operators of restaurants in Panama City Beach, you serve as the backbone to our City and provide opportunities for our citizens to enjoy fellowship together along the world's most beautiful beaches. However, a recent trend has created confusion and concern among our constituents that we ask you to address.

Due to ever-changing market conditions, some restaurants have engaged in adding service fees to their prices separate and above the price for any particular menu item. These fees, while legal, can often serve to confuse the public regarding the nature of the fee. Many consumers have contacted the City on the mistaken belief that these services fees are assessed by the City. We can confirm that the City charges no services fees and ask that you take affirmative steps to prevent this confusion.

Florida law currently requires that any "automatic gratuity or service fee" be displayed on the menu and included on the face of the bill. We are unsure if these fees are being displayed on the menu.

However, the Florida Deceptive and Unfair Trade Practices Act prohibits "unfair or deceptive acts or practices" in the conduct of commerce. It is our belief that service which mislead the consumer about the nature of the fee violate the intent and spirit of Florida law.

We urge you to address and take care in your treatment of the consumers of the City of Panama City Beach and to treat them with honesty and transparency. We understand that many of our local restaurants are doing just that, and we thank you for your commitment to our City. We hope that you will continue to use caution in adding additional service fees so that the public is well-informed of the price paid for their patronage.

Sincerely,

Stuart Tetterer  
Mayor

Michael Jarman  
Vice Mayor

Paul Casto  
Councilman, Ward 1

Ethan Register  
Councilman, Ward 2

Mary Coburn  
Councilmember, Ward 3

cc: Larry Basford, State Attorney, 14<sup>th</sup> Judicial Circuit

**Mayor**  
Stuart Tetterer

**Vice Mayor**  
Michael Jarman

**Ward 1**  
Paul Casto

**Ward 2**  
Ethan Register

**Ward 3**  
Mary Coburn

**City Manager**  
Drew Whitman