



## LETTER TO THE COMMISSION

**LTC No: 25-197**

**TO:** Honorable Mayor and Members of the Fort Lauderdale City Commission  
**FROM:** Rickelle Williams, City Manager *RW*  
**DATE:** October 13, 2025  
**SUBJECT: Oceans of Soul Jazz Festival**

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The purpose of this Letter to the Commission (LTC) is to inform the City Commission of the cancellation of the approved Oceans of Soul Jazz Festival scheduled for December 6 - 7, 2025.

On January 7, 2025, a temporary beach license and outdoor event agreement request for the Oceans of Soul Jazz Festival was considered and approved by the City Commission (CAM #24-1115) for the event to take place in September 2025. On April 1, 2025, an amendment to the agreement for a date change was approved by Commission (CAM #25-0136) to move the event to December 2025. The Oceans of Soul Jazz Festival was scheduled to feature live music performances from a variety of R&B, Funk, Soul and Jazz artists as well as other activities including food vendors, merchandise, and sponsor activations.

On Thursday, October 2, 2025, event producer Gregory Scott, Executive Director of Royal Recordings LLC, notified staff of the need to postpone the Oceans of Soul Jazz Festival due to a short-term challenge with funding partners and the decline in ticket sales impacting festivals.

Mr. Scott has requested to reschedule the event to December 5 - 6, 2026. Staff will continue to work with Mr. Scott and will bring an item forward to the City Commission in December 2025 for consideration and approval of the new event dates.

Attachment:

1. Notification of Postponement for the Oceans of Soul Jazz Festival

c: D'Wayne M. Spence, Interim City Attorney  
David R. Soloman, City Clerk  
Patrick Reilly, City Auditor  
City Manager's Office  
Department Directors

Dear City of Fort Lauderdale Special Events Team,

I hope this message finds you well.

I'm reaching out as the Executive Director of the Oceans of Soul Jazz Festival at Fort Lauderdale Beach Park. We've greatly appreciated the guidance and efficiency of your team throughout our approval process to date.

I'm writing to formally notify you of a strategic postponement of our event from the approved December 6-7, 2025, dates to December 5-6, 2026. This adjustment follows a thorough review of investor commitments and industry dynamics, ensuring we deliver an outstanding festival that fully aligns with the city's high standards for special events.

To provide context: We've encountered a short-term impasse with funding partners, compounded by broader challenges in the live events sector. Recent discussions with Country Nation highlighted nationwide ticket sales declines affecting over 40 festivals this year, including significant drops at events like **High Sierra** (40% down), and the **Essence Festival**, a major annual urban event focused on Black culture and music, experienced a decline in 2025 compared to previous years. **Jazz in the Gardens** 2025, Black Promoters Collective noted low-ticket sales on the first day of the festival. Their advice? Launch at a moderate scale to build sustainably—mirroring Tortuga's success, where ~50% repeat attendees have created a loyal base driving 100,000+ annual visitors and multimillion-dollar impacts.

This second timeline shift reflects our dedication to excellence: A 2026 debut at 8,000-10,000 attendees will allow us to test demand, optimize logistics, and scale confidently—projecting \$3.5M+ in local economic benefits from the start. We would like to confirm venue availability for the new dates and are advancing planning, including artist outreach and audience growth.

To facilitate this, we kindly request:

- An extension or amendment to our existing agreement for the 2026 dates.
- Guidance on any updated requirements.
- We would like to submit a new detailed site plan and new application tailored to 8,000-10,000 attendees, and we'd appreciate your input on the best process for that submission.
- A brief call (15-20 minutes) next week to discuss coordination, and streamlined approvals.

Please let me know your availability—I'm reachable at (954) 870-0670 or royalrecordingsllc@gmail.com. Thank you for your partnership in making Fort Lauderdale a premier event destination. We're eager to collaborate closely as we prepare for a successful 2026.

Best regards,  
Greg Scott  
Executive Director & CEO