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US Commerce Secretary Lutnick planned Epstein island visit, emails show

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Grace Eliza Goodwin



US Commerce Department Secretary Howard Lutnick planned a visit to Jeffrey Epstein's island with his family, emails show - years after Lutnick claimed to have cut ties with the convicted paedophile.

The billionaire businessman, his wife, their four children and another family planned to travel to Little Saint James in 2012, according to emails included in the latest Epstein files released by the US Department of Justice (DOJ).

The emails contradict statements Lutnick made in October about vowing in 2005 to "never be in a room" with Epstein again.

A Commerce Department spokesperson said Lutnick had never been accused of any wrongdoing in connection to Epstein.

On Friday, the justice department released millions of pages from Epstein files, the largest number of documents shared by the government since a law mandated their release last year.

Several emails show Lutnick and his family planned a visit to Little Saint James - a private island that Epstein purchased in 1998.

In one email from December 2012, Lutnick's wife Allison wrote to Epstein's assistant: "We are looking forward to visiting you. We will be coming from Caneel Bay in the morning. We are a crowd... 2 families each with 4 kids ranging in age from 7-16! 6 boys and 2 girls. I hope that's okay. We would love to join you for lunch."

In another email, sent to a redacted recipient days before his wife's email, Lutnick writes: "Hi Jeff, We are landing in St. Thomas early Saturday afternoon and planning to head over to St. Bart's/Anguilla on Monday at some point... Does Sunday evening for dinner sound good?"

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Lutnick then asks for specific location details for his boat captain, and mentions that another family is with his family.

Other emails were exchanged in December about Howard Lutnick joining Epstein for lunch on the island.

On 24 December 2012, Lutnick received an email from a redacted sender that said Epstein wanted to pass a message to him, which said: "Nice seeing you" - suggesting that at least one visit did happen.

The emails do not indicate any wrongdoing.

According to an October 2025 interview with the New York Post, Lutnick said he had cut ties with Epstein in 2005 when the pair were neighbours in New York.

Lutnick explained to the newspaper that Epstein had given him and his wife a tour of his Manhattan townhouse, where the late financier showed off his massage room.

"I say to him, 'Massage table in the middle of your house? How often do you have a massage?'" Lutnick told the Post. "And he says, 'Every day.' And then he gets, like weirdly close to me, and he says, 'And the right kind of massage'."

Lutnick told the outlet that, after leaving Epstein's house, "in the six to eight steps it takes to get from his house to my house, my wife and I decided that I will never be in the room with that disgusting person ever again".

The Commerce Department said in a statement to the BBC that "Secretary Lutnick had limited interactions with Mr Epstein in the presence of his wife and has never been accused of wrongdoing".

Three million pages, 180,000 images and 2,000 videos were posted publicly by the DOJ on Friday.

Epstein was convicted in 2008 in Florida for soliciting sex from a 14-year-old girl after coming to a controversial plea agreement with prosecutors.

He died in August 2019 while in jail on charges in a sex trafficking case.

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