

March 16, 2009

Senator Linda Menard
Alaska State Capitol, Room #9
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Menard:

On behalf of the visitor industry in the Mat-Su Valley, I want to personally thank you for your co-sponsorship of SB 138. Tourism is vital to the economic health of the Valley. Our many small businesses rely on the marketing efforts of the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) to bring visitors to Alaska. As a member of the ATIA board of directors and marketing committee I know the value of the research-based campaigns and programs.

For many years ATIA has advocated for a \$20 million marketing program to compete with the many other destinations vying for visitors. I was pleased to hear this session of the tourism marketing tax credit as a means to get us there. Since ATIA has lost the voluntary contributions from the cruise industry, this is a great opportunity to reinvest a significant portion of the tourism taxes collected by the state.

This legislation will benefit the many small businesses in the Valley who have seen a decrease in the independent and highway traveler. Mat-Su CVB has fielded many calls from businesses worried about the upcoming visitor season and the prediction of a decline in visitors. Your support of this bill will increase the marketing efforts of ATIA and encourage travelers to choose Alaska.

Thank you senator for adding your name to this legislation. I will be in Juneau March 31 – April 2 and look forward to seeing you then. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 907-746-5001 or bonnie@alaskavisit.com

Sincerely,

Bonnie Quill
Executive Director