

***Big Delta State Historical Park
dba Rika's Roadhouse and Landing
PO Box 1229
Delta Junction, AK 99737***

February 23, 2009

Representative John Harris
Room 403 State Capital
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Representative Harris,

My name is Dick Wenger. I live in Big Delta and work in season at the Big Delta State Historical Park a.k.a. Rika's Roadhouse. We are a very small operation relative to some, nevertheless I feel strongly about the value that we offer as a venue to share the history of this great state, and to provide a beautiful oasis to travelers driving long stretches on the Richardson Hwy.

Yes, the gifts bought and the food eaten by the average of 30,000 tourists we serve during the summers is a boon to the economy, but realistically, if they didn't stop here, they would spend that money elsewhere in the state. But the fact is, that money is important to us here. Right now, the economy in the Delta area is the best it's been in years due to the current construction phase at Fort Greeley. However, as we all know, that will not last; tourism, on the other hand is a renewable resource. Why wouldn't we want to invest in something that has proven to pay dividends? Taxes to the state, employment for thousands, money spent in a hundred different ways, more than offset a reasonable budget for tourism advertising.

Finally, our restaurant workers and tour guides are almost exclusively students from the local high school. The work experience provided by the tourist industry is an investment in the real future of Alaska: our young people.

Please give your support. Thank you for your consideration on this issue.

Sincerely,

Dick Wenger

DW/bw