



Copper Whale Inn

The Gem of Downtown Anchorage!

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March 18, 2009

Representative Les Gara
State Capitol, Room 500
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Representative Gara,

Greetings from the Copper Whale Inn! I am writing you today to request your support of increased funding for statewide tourism marketing. As the manager of an award-winning Inn in downtown Anchorage, my business' future is directly related to efforts of the Alaska Tourism Industry Association to keep Alaska at the front of consumers' minds when considering their vacation destination each year.

These efforts benefit tourism-related businesses across the spectrum, from the smallest mom-and-pop operations to the largest cruise-ship companies. The more visitors we all host, the greater the number of Alaskan tourism employees remain employed. In this time of economic instability, we are all concerned about how the downturn will affect our ability to make a living. The first victim of cutbacks is often marketing, but in reality, increased marketing is the fuel that will help to power the uncertain seasons of 2009 and 2010.

Tourism marketing cutbacks are self-defeating not only for the short-term but for the future, as the lower numbers of visitors guaranteed by a lack of visibility now will translate into fewer tourists down the line, too. We need to show visitors that we are unwilling to accept a glum status quo, but will step up to the plate and give them a great experience regardless of the challenge. By casting aside the cloak of malaise, we give our guests even more of a reason to go home and tell their friends what a fantastic time they had on their trip to Alaska! And this, in turn, will bring more people here next year, and the next. Marketing dollars used wisely now will help propel the industry through these tough times and insure that, when the pendulum swings in the other direction, we will be poised to leap ahead in the game and grab a bigger share of the visitor market.

I thank you for your consideration.

With best regards,

Glen Hemingson
General Manager