

February 12, 2009

Senator Hollis French
State Capitol, Room 417
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator French,

As my Senator, I wanted to take this opportunity to let you know the importance of tourism to myself, my family and our community. I benefit directly as I am employed by the Alaska Travel Industry Association and believe tourism is a renewable resource Alaska needs to support.

Visitors to Alaska not only bring dollars into the state overall, but provide an important resource for our immediate community. There are dozens of hotels, car rentals and bed and breakfasts in the Spenard area that provide countless jobs for Alaskans. Their guests also spend dollars at the local coffee shops, restaurants, food marts, etc. located throughout the area. Many are my and your neighbors and friends. Additionally, these businesses upgrade our community by keeping it clean, beautifying it with flowers and in general keeping their properties well.

Secondly, as an employee of ATIA, I work every day with members who make their living through tourism, from Ketchikan to Nome. The vast majority of these members are small businesses who love Alaska and want to share it with our visitors. They do not have the budget or resources to market in a highly competitive world clamoring for visitors. They rely on ATIA to reach the market as well as provide affordable opportunities for them to promote their individual services.

That is why it is vital the state supports this industry through increased funding for marketing. It is the only way to sustain and grow our visitor numbers and thus maintain and grow the Alaska's tourism now and for our future. I urge you to support reinvesting tourism related taxes into ATIA's marketing programs. Having worked with ATIA for 7 years, I can tell you that under the direction of our Marketing Committee comprised of 32 individuals from Alaska's tourism industry, every dollar is used effectively and to Alaska's best interest. With a \$20 million investment, Alaska can grow visitors and the industry, benefiting people, communities and the state overall.

Respectfully,

Jackie Englund
Website Development & Marketing Manager
Alaska Travel Industry Association

