



John
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ALASKA



March 3, 2009

Senator Hollis French
Capital Room 417
Juneau, Alaska

Dear Senator French,

I writing today to give you thanks of your continued support toward the survival of the Alaska Travel Industry and for talking my call in regards to your attendance at a recent Legislative Briefing. I know you're a busy man and one who receives many calls, emails and letters, so please allow me to reintroduce myself.

My name is John S. Hall III and my family operates an Alaska tour company who specializes in Motorcoach tours throughout our beautiful state as well as our neighbor to the east, Yukon Territory. We have been touring guests through our 49th state since 1985 and feel proud to be part of such a historic and magnificent land. Our goal has always been to deliver the ultimate experience while taking patrons into the most rural and unique of communities such as, Chitna, Coldfoot, Deadhorse, McCarthy/Kennicott, Valdez, Cordova, Tok, & Chicken, as well as other locations along the Parks Highway and throughout Southeast via the beautiful vessels of Holland America Line & Princess Cruises. Our company employs 8 full time and 5 seasonal associates whose passion is Alaska and depend heavily upon the success of our operation and destination Alaska in order to provide for their loved ones.

Like many other businesses large and small alike, we were recently forced to make unfortunate cutbacks in staffing, individuals that had been a part of our family for 5 years or more, while drawing down our marketing budget by over 30%. Now more than ever, our family business depends on the marketability of Alaska as the destination for young and old alike. With your support HB 147 was passed through the Senate allowing the travel industry to further excite and draw in visitors. Private and public sectors alike should be thankful for the steps made in Juneau to secure the short term future of Alaska tourism. I however believe it is crucial to act now and put a plan in place to increase the existing monies of 9 million annually provided from the state through the taxes imposed on travelers using rental cars to include cruise vessel taxes moving us to a once appropriated fund of 20million.

During an era of doom and gloom for many states facing multi billion dollar shortfalls in budgets and now the idea of bailouts that can be paid back to Washington DC later, I believe that the state of Alaska should act now and take advantage of its fiscal responsibility to increase awareness of our awesome state while drawing them away form destinations that offer bikini filled beaches, unstable governments (Mexico), or a pair of mouse ears. We have an opportunity only afforded to a few states in the union right now and I know we can all come together to benefit the thousands of jobs created by tourism as well as the dollars generated through bed taxes which goes directly to the school systems and futures of young Alaska boys and girls.

I again want to thank you for your time and if I can ever be of assistance to questions or comments from you or your staff, please do not hesitate to call on a proud Anchorage Continuant.

Regards,

John S. Hall III

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