
From: Laurie Booyse
Sent: Tuesday, February 03, 2009 3:10 PM
Subject: Please support ATIA funding and changes to wastewater discharge

February 3, 2009

Dear Senator Stedman,

I want to thank you again for supporting and passing HB 147 in the last legislative session. I am writing today to urge your support for tourism marketing initiatives and funding that may arise in 2009, as well as supporting the amendment of the 2006 ballot governing the discharge of cruise ship waste water.

I work for an Alaska family-owned business that not only services cruise ship passengers, we take independent travelers on marine tours; and we offer parts and service to local marine operators; and we build vessels that are used locally and across the nation. Our operations not only support local families and businesses, but we help support a vital economic driver of Southeast Alaska - Tourism.

As you well know, tourism is a key component to the economy in Ketchikan. The state's funding of the Alaska Travel Industry marketing programs, is key to bringing guests to our great state. As an Alaska based business, if Allen Marine was left completely on it's own for attracting visitors to Southeast, we would never be able to match the power of the dollars and marketing programs presented by the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA). The state's funding of the ATIA programs is vital to attracting travelers to our state, instead of somewhere else for their vacation. In these difficult economic times it is extremely important that we convey to potential travelers not only that Alaska is a great place to vacation, but also that the experience value of their dollars will be terrific. ATIA's regional, national and international marketing programs will continue to be a key factor in drawing visitors to our state.

I would also urge you to support enabling the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) to determine the parameters for the cruise ship wastewater discharge permit based on science, not on the uneducated opinions of a ballot initiative author. As you are well aware, if our Water Department in Ketchikan were held to the extremely strict parameters expected of the cruiselines, KPU would not be able to offer water to any Ketchikan resident. No community in Alaska is required to adhere to such stringent standards. If the initiative is not modified the cruise ships will be forced to find alternative "dumping areas", which would negatively impact on Ketchikan with much shorter port calls or even skipping our town altogether. With the great strides we have made in partnering with the cruiselines it would be a shame to undo that work over this issue.

Most of us in the hospitality and tourism industry do our jobs because we love to share the uniqueness and beauty of our home town and home state with visitors from far and near. Rather Let's work together to continue to make Alaska a great place to visit and to do business.

On behalf of the approximately 30 people who work here at Allen Marine Tours in Ketchikan, I thank you for your time and efforts on these fronts. .

Sincerely,
Laurie Booyse
Sales & Service Manager

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