



May 4, 2016

Colonel James Cockrell
Director, Alaska State Troopers
5700 East Tudor Road
Anchorage, AK 99507

Chief Chris Tolley
Anchorage Police Department
4501 Elmore Road
Anchorage, AK 99507

Dear Colonel Cockrell and Chief Tolley:

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is the state's leading non-profit trade association for the tourism industry representing over 750 business members and partners. Last summer Alaska saw a record number of visitors, attracting almost 2 million travelers who are exploring Alaska's natural attractions and beautiful communities. Many of those travelers are choosing to visit the Kenai Peninsula via the Seward Highway, including the community of Seward. In fact, a 2011 study by the McDowell Group showed over 355,000 out of state visitors went to Seward. The majority of visitors to the Kenai Peninsula, both those coming to our state to visit as well as Anchorage residents, must travel the stretch of highway between Anchorage and Girdwood. Alaska's summer months see a convergence of all of these travelers utilizing the Seward Highway into what has become one of the most beautiful and perhaps dangerous stretches of road in our state.

First and foremost, ATIA supports the Alaska State Troopers and Anchorage Police Department to continue to work with the communities involved to identify a timely solution, ensuring the safety of those traveling along the Seward Highway.

It is critical for people to know there are safety resources on hand in the event of an accident, especially leading into the summer months of Alaska. Our business members recognize each time an accident happens, out of necessity and for the safety of others, the highway is closed for several hours. These closures cause a ripple of logistic and itinerary delays for travelers and the businesses who are hosting Alaska's visitors.

We strongly encourage finding a resolution so traffic-related incidents can be responded to in a timely manner no matter when they occur.

Thank you for your consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact me should you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sarah Leonard".

Sarah Leonard
President & CEO

cc: Commissioner Gary Folger
Mayor Ethan Berkowitz

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