

2015– 2016
Executive Officers

Chair
Colleen Stephens
Stan Stephens Glacier & Wildlife Adventures

Vice Chair
Dennis McDonnell
Alaska Coach Tours

Treasurer/Finance Chair
Charlie Ball
Holland America/Princess – Alaska

Secretary/Membership Chair
Bonnie Quill
Mat-Su Convention & Visitors Bureau

Government Relations Co-Chairs
Bill Pedlar
Knighly Tours
Julie Saupe
Visit Anchorage

Marketing Chair
Patti Mackey
Ketchikan Visitors Bureau

Tourism Policy & Planning Chair
Deb Hickok
Explore Fairbanks

Past Chair
Scott Habberstad
Alaska Airlines

President & CEO
Sarah Leonard
Alaska Travel Industry Association

Board of Directors

Adam Baldwin
Anchorage Museum

John Binkley
CLIA/Alaska Cruise Association

Brett Carlson
Northern Alaska Tour Company

Kory Eberhardt
A Taste of Alaska Lodge

Paul Goodwin
Holland America Line

Peter Grunwaldt
Premier Alaska Tours

Elizabeth Hall
John Hall's Alaska Cruises and Tours

Deb Hansen
Pike's Waterfront Lodge

Kirk Hoessle
Alaska Wildland Adventures

Shanon Hamrick
Kenai Peninsula Tourism Marketing Council

Karen Harris
Alaska Garden Gate B&B and Cottages

Thomas McAleer
Alaska Denali Travel

Tim McDonnell
Temsco Helicopters, Inc.

Dan Oberlatz
Alaska Alpine Adventures, Inc.



June 6, 2016

Governor Bill Walker
Office of the Governor
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811

Garry White, Board Chair
Southeast Conference
PO Box 21989
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Governor Walker and Mr. White:

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) is Alaska's leading statewide nonprofit trade association for the travel industry representing over 700 member businesses with almost one-third of those businesses located in communities serviced by the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS). The ferry has been an important component to a strong and diversified tourism industry in Alaska. According to the 2015 report by the McDowell Group, *Economic Impacts of Alaska Marine Highway System*, over 100,000 visitors traveled on the ferry in 2014 resulting in an estimated economic impact of \$29 million.

As you are aware, the continued reduction in AMHS ferry service and unreliable schedule impacts Alaska's tourism industry businesses and communities that rely on ferry visitors. This impact translates to potential loss of economic benefit back to Alaska communities in the form of fewer services and goods purchased by businesses, reduced itineraries and loss of jobs.

ATIA supports the efforts outlined in the MOU between the State of Alaska and Southeast Conference. The Alaska Marine Highway System is in crisis. It is sound management to develop a long-term sustainable strategy. As public input is sought, ATIA would like to offer our expertise on the tourism sector and have the travel industry represented as a member of the steering committee.

We appreciate the work you are doing to address the severity of the situation and we welcome the opportunity to collaborate on a long-term solution.

Sincerely,

Colleen Stephens
Board Chair

Sarah Leonard
President & CEO

cc: Commissioner Luiken, Alaska Department of Transportation
Marine Transportation Advisory Board