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April 21, 2023

Dear Senate Finance Committee Members,

The Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) wishes to thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony regarding the FY 24 operating and capital budgets. We would like to reiterate the importance of the request for \$5 million for FY 24 that was included in Governor Dunleavy's budget. The investment made by the State to the destination marketing campaign, Travel Alaska, pays off in spades with approximately \$130 million in general funds to the treasury and a \$4.5 billion in return to Alaska in total economic output from the tourism industry annually. We greatly appreciate the need to balance competing needs and respectfully ask you maintain the full amount of \$5 million in the Operating Budget you advance from committee.

Funds spent in the national and international travel marketplace generate huge returns for Alaskans. According to a recent [report](#) produced by McKinley Research, visitors to our state during the summer of 2019 spent \$2.79 billion directly with Alaska businesses. Labor income was \$1.11 billion representing over 35,000 jobs. The State and municipalities received over \$243 million alone in bed taxes, sales taxes, docking fees, fishing licenses, AMHS tickets, Alaska Railroad tickets, vehicle rental taxes, and more.

This investment is necessary to generate these returns for Alaska. Other states and international destinations are spending tens of millions each year to keep their brand in front of consumers. With your past support we have managed to help the tourism sector start recovering from COVID and are seeing incremental gains, but those gains are from past investments and funds in this year's budget are to market ahead of the 2025 season.

Once visitors arrive in Alaska, ATIA's 600 member businesses and regional partner destination marketing organizations are working hard to provide quality experiences for them. Please maintain the Governor's level of funding for tourism marketing of \$5 million to ATIA to fund Travel Alaska so that we can continue to position Alaska for success in 2025.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Hall and Dennis McDonnell
ATIA Government Relations co-chairs

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