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September 1, 2023

The Honorable Bruce Westerman
Chairman, House Natural Resources Committee
202 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515-0404

On behalf of the 600 members of the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), we urge you to support HR 1314, The LODGE Act, a bill which would allow land management agencies to enter into agreements with housing entities to provide housing relief in public lands gateway communities.

In forums, conventions, summits, and other events around Alaska in the past few years, ATIA has heard repeatedly about housing shortages affecting communities large and small. While silver bullets for this challenge are elusive, one solution for our gateway communities lies in The LODGE Act.

Communities which include Department of Interior agencies can benefit from the bill's purpose of developing a shared housing model to be built and managed by federal funding. Once established, it would be available to employees working in the community from both inside and outside those agencies. This would relieve housing pressure in the seasonal worker segment, one which is most challenging to accommodate. Alaskan communities such as Sitka, Skagway, Gustavus, Seward, Healy, King Salmon, and Port Alsworth are some of the towns which could be encompassed by this bill.

When fundamental pressures such as workforce and housing shortages become less dire, the positive impacts of Alaska's broad tourism economy become more expansive. Our sector is responsible for \$4.5 billion in total economic output annually in the state while generating \$2.5 billion in direct visitor spending. With solutions like The LODGE Act in the pipeline, our impact can only grow.

Thank you for considering support for this bill. Please reach out if ATIA can answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Jillian Simpson
ATIA President & CEO

Craig Jennison, TEMSCO Helicopters
ATIA Board of Directors Chair

Cc: The Honorable Blake Moore
The Honorable Mary Peltola

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