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February 21, 2024

To Senator Murkowski and Representative Peltola,

On behalf of the 600 members of the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), we urge you to support The Workforce Housing Tax Credit (WHTC) Act, and any companion bill in the House, a bill which encompasses many policy issues important to the tourism and outdoor recreation industries.

Housing shortages have been an underlying theme in conversations, forums, and panel discussions centered on Alaska workforce challenges in the past few years. The high cost and limited inventory of safe housing has put pressure on communities as businesses work to recover from the devastating economic impacts of the COVID19 pandemic.

According to Alaska's Department of Labor and Workforce Development, the average single family home price in Alaska in 2022 was over \$422,000 and average rent rates for two-bedroom apartments in March of 2023 was well over \$1,000 across all regions. The percentage of people who spend at least half of their income on housing costs has climbed over the past few years and the rate of chronic homelessness in Alaska has shot from 31.5 individuals per 100,000 in 2019 to 78.2 in 2022. Housing isn't just a tourism-related challenge, but one which cuts across all sectors of the economy and society.

The WHTC will encourage the private sector, through tax incentives, to build more affordable housing for those who earn too much to qualify for low-income affordable housing, and not enough to afford housing where they work.

We urge you to support this proposed bipartisan, bicameral solution to a problem affecting Alaska and America's workforce and business owners. Please reach out if ATIA can answer any questions or provide additional information.

Sincerely,

Jillian Simpson  
President & CEO

Craig Jennison  
ATIA Board Chair