



July 2, 2020

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The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
522 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dan Sullivan
United States Senate
702 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510

Senators Murkowski and Sullivan:

Thank you, once again, for your responsiveness and concern for Alaska's visitor industry and tourism businesses of all sectors and sizes as we work to recover, whether through funding requests or legislation, from the significant impacts from the COVID19 pandemic.

One of those efforts is through the Coronavirus Economic Relief for Transportation Services (CERTS) Act. This bipartisan bill will aid transportation providers that have lost a significant amount of their revenue due to COVID-19.

Unlike Section 4003 of the CARES Act, which focused solely on air carriers, the CERTS Act includes provisions for a broader cross section of transportation providers, ranging from public and charter busses to small passenger vessels and other transportation services regulated by the U.S. Department of Transportation. Funds, in the form of grants, may be used not only for payroll protection, but also to maintain fleets of boats and motor coaches, and support debt relief and loan repayment.

In late June, market research company Destination Analysts noted consumer confidence in travel is declining once again due to upticks in COVID-19 cases throughout the United States. According to its most recent survey, respondents feel least safe traveling by cruise ship (80%), followed by inter-city motor coach (75%) and bus or group tour (75%). These sentiments do not bode well for Alaska's tourism industry, which relies heavily on cruise travel and motor coach transportation to support businesses across the state.

Of the more than 650 members of the Alaska Travel Industry Association, transportation providers typically have the highest operating costs due to substantial capital investments. The CERTS Act and its provisions for capital repayment and maintenance are necessary if we are to have a healthy transportation sector to support tourism as it rebounds.

Thank you for your support of this bill, and for your time and energy on behalf of Alaska's tourism industry. Your willingness to listen to our industry concerns as we continue to navigate the significant impacts of COVID-19, is greatly appreciated.

Sarah Leonard
President & CEO

Dan Oberlatz, Alaska Alpine Adventures
ATIA 2019-2020 Board Chair