

From: [Michael Hekkers](#)
To: [City Clerk](#)
Subject: Visitor Industry task force comments
Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2020 10:59:12 AM

EXTERNAL E-MAIL: BE CAUTIOUS WHEN OPENING FILES OR FOLLOWING LINKS

I'm Mike Hekkers. I have lived downtown for 21 years. I guide visitors on the trails and waters of Juneau. I think our town is pretty special and I enjoy seeing visitors admiring it too.

BUT with 4 to 6 ships in town at once it feels overcrowded on the docks, the bus lots, streets, and the sidewalks.

I encourage you to do the following 2 things: 1) Say No to Norwegian, 2) Go Big on tackling the climate emergency.

1) We should **say NO to Norwegian** for a fifth dock. With their pattern of hot-berthing 2 megaships at one dock a day like the Bliss and Joy, that is 8,000 extra visitors per day or potentially 1.2 million extra passengers per year. It's like taking one of those monster shopping bags to Costco. It always seems to get filled up. Just because they took a \$20 million risk, we shouldn't be bullied into giving them a lease for a dock. Their model is more mega ships. Is that what we want? No. A friend of mine was on the Docks and Harbors board and long before this lot came up for sale he said the board was happy with 4 docks and didn't want any more. CBJ should also say no to hot-berthing. One ship per dock per day.

I am also a glaciologist. You may have seen my younger face in the movie at the visitor center. I ask you to turn around and look at our Mendenhall Glacier image behind you. It has retreated 1.1 miles in the 40 years since that photo. Last summer was the hottest ever in Juneau. The Taku Glacier is now retreating too! We are in a 'climate emergency.'

Arguably what's more important than the # of visitors is their carbon footprint. It's the elephant in the room.

- 2) My second ask is for you to **go big on tackling the climate emergency**.
- a. Offer one year of free docking and no head tax for the first 5 cruise ships that run on renewables. Drive the change in the industry so we can see results this decade. We can be the leader for renewable-based tourism.
 - b. 700,000 visitors will go to the glacier this summer. Put them on a light rail train that can take 500 at a time and get dozens of old stinking coaches off the streets and solve congestion problems at both ends. We don't want a massive parking lot at the glacier. We locals will use the train for commuting.
 - c. Create a Biggest Loser competition for tour operators. The company that sheds the most fossil fuels wins a prize.

In Summary: 1) Say NO to Norwegian for a 5th dock. Saying yes is opening Juneau to another 1.2 million on top of our 1.4 million. 2) Go Big on incentivizing and reducing the carbon footprint of visitors. For each recommendation you make, ask yourselves does it improve the quality of life, promote sustainable business, and lower carbon.