

Mike Ward, Taku Glacier Lodge

Good morning and Thank you for taking my testimony. Thank you to the people responsible for the recognition of the need for this task force. Thank you, Task Force, for all the hard work that you all are doing to make this important process productive and enlightening. My name is Mike Ward and I am a third generation Jeaunite. I was born and raised in Juneau, but more specifically, I grew up at Taku Glacier Lodge. For 27 years the Taku Lodge has been my family's business, and my passion. It is where I live, work, and the place where my own children are being raised as well. My wife followed her passion as well, starting her own business as a birthing Doula serving Juneau's Pregnant, laboring and postpartum Mothers.

Taku Glacier Lodge is located about 30 miles south of Juneau across from the Hole-in-the-Wall Glacier on the banks of the Taku River. It was built as one Alaska's very first hunting and fishing camp's by Dr. Harry Devighne. He owed a practice in Juneau and also provided health care for miners and staff at the AJ Gold mine. Dr. Devighne served as Alaska's first commissioner of health and famously managed the organization of the diphtheria vaccine being mushed from Anchorage to Nome. In 1934 the Lodge became the property of Mary Joyce – Another one of Alaska's most colorful and accomplished adventurers. She turned the camp into a tourist resort with lodging to accommodate up to 30 guests. Mary Joyce was also the first female radio operator in the Alaska territory; she mushed dog teams over long distances, flew Bush planes and even ran for the Legislature. She has been recognized in the Alaska Women's Hall of Fame. The Taku Lodge has been hosting visitors since its construction in 1923 all the while helping to build Alaska's rich history in hunting, fishing, mining, dog mushing, adventuring and more. Today we honor theses history's by providing one of the most unique, authentic, and safe, ways to immerse yourself and enjoy the beautiful wilds of Southeast Alaska.

As Lodge manager, I'm both the caretaker of the property and the custodian of its history. Every summer day I share my passion for Alaska history, culture and nature –

and delight our guests with our famous Alaska seafood in a place where time simply, stands still.

I can do all this because of cruise ship tourism.

Our business operates off the historic downtown waterfront where float plane aviation in Juneau began in the 1920s. We've made great strides over the last 15 years to minimize our footprint in the community. Investments in improved engine technology on our aircraft have helped reduce noise levels substantially. At the lodge we practice green living wherever we can including utilizing our solar energy, incorporating recycle and careful waste management programs.

Taku Lodge is privately owned, and as part of the Borough, we pay all relevant taxes even though we don't receive services like police and fire protection, snow removal or street maintenance.

Working in tourism and aviation, we understand the impacts and know it's important for the generations to come. That is why we are here at the table now as we plan a responsible and prosperous future for Juneau and all of its residents.

At the Lodge I tell a story that began in the 1920's and I want it to continue to be told 100 years from now.