



Allen Marine Tours

P.O. Box 1049, Sitka, Alaska 99835 | 1512 Sawmill Creek Road, Sitka, Alaska 99835

January 29, 2020

Dear Juneau Assembly and Visitor Industry Task Force,

My name is Zak Kirkpatrick and I serve as the Chief Marketing Officer for Allen Marine, which includes our day tour company, Allen Marine Tours, small ship cruise line, Alaskan Dream Cruises, and shipyard, Allen Marine, Inc. The company is owned and operated by the Allen family, who are Tlingit of the Kaagwaantaan clan. As locals and as major players in Southeast Alaska's visitor industry we've paid close attention to the conversation regarding the future of tourism in Juneau. We do not wish to dismiss or downplay concerns that residents have regarding the industry. To the contrary, we believe these voices are important and that every industry deserves periodic examination. To this end, we tip our hat to TBMP—they have worked tirelessly to champion both the cause of the industry and a healthy community.

We know you'll likely receive ample facts and figures that showcase how critical the visitor industry is to the economy of Juneau and Southeast, Alaska, especially at a time when other sectors are suffering, and budgets are declining. In our organization alone, we employ nearly 150 year-round and 400 seasonal employees. Our hiring managers make every effort possible to hire locally and would be thrilled if they were able to staff our company exclusively with residents of Southeast Alaska. With the growth of the industry we have been able to expand our full-time, year-round work force. Such positions include accountants, mechanics, operations managers, marketing professionals, sales and reservations specialists, captains and more. These are not transient employment opportunities that disappear at the end of September. They are opportunities for career development and living wages. We also feel it would be short sighted to downplay the significance of growing seasonal opportunities. I was born and raised in Juneau and was able to pay for much of my post-secondary education with wages earned from excellent summer employment in the visitor industry. The wages available to me in jobs as a student down south paled in comparison to those offered by organizations in Juneau's visitor industry.

Throughout my life I've heard Southeast residents express concern over the percentage of Alaskan youth who permanently leave the state after high school graduation. When I received a degree in advertising from Brigham Young University in Utah it appeared most of my opportunities would be in large metropolitan areas in the lower 48 and that I would become one of these statistics. Openings in my chosen business field and emphasis were limited in Southeast, Alaska, but I was determined to return to the place I had grown to love. As it turned out, the thriving visitor industry presented me such an opportunity. Many in our Juneau division



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have similar stories. Others came as seasonal workers, fell in love with the area, and took up permanent residency.

In my position I have daily interactions with members of the Allen family, including Dave Allen, the current owner. As a Tlingit family, "Alaska" is more than what they do for a living; it is their ancestral home. As such, they make it a top priority to support other local businesses. Our large retail program focuses on local food companies, artists, authors, and photographers. Growth of the industry has directly benefited these small retailers.

Due to the success and growth of the industry, we've enjoyed increased ability to give to local schools and youth activities as well as local non-profits. We've noticed the volume of these requests grow as state and local budgets have tightened. We're honored to showcase our beautiful home for a living and then to give back to the rising generation and charitable causes.

Finally, we have been inspired by what we have heard from our major cruise line partners regarding their sustainability plans and efforts. In recent visits we were told about pending onboard initiatives such as eliminating single-use plastics. Certain brands are even requiring operators to achieve accredited green certifications in order to be preferred partners. This has all led to an industry culture of encouraging each other to continually reduce waste and limit environmental impact.

I'm just one example of a born and raised Juneauite who has found success in this thriving industry. As the assembly and task force work to establish a path forward we of course encourage prudent decisions that bear in mind the legitimate concerns of residents. However, we also strongly feel the governing body must be careful not to stifle an industry that has become so beneficial to many locals, both directly and indirectly. We ask that you keep the overwhelming positives at the forefront of the conversation.

Thank you for your time,

Zak Kirkpatrick
Chief Marketing Officer
Allen Marine

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