

## Brenwynne Grigg

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**From:** Chris Meier  
**Sent:** Wednesday, October 7, 2020 1:09 PM  
**To:** Economic Stabilization; Borough Assembly  
**Subject:** Extreme Hardship Grant

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

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Dear Economic Stabilization Task Force & Juneau Assembly,

Alaska Travel Adventures (ATA), has been in operation since 1978. Based in Juneau, we offer more than 20 unique tour programs in five Alaskan communities including Juneau, Sitka, Ketchikan, Skagway & Anchorage. ATA provides meaningful annual income for hundreds of full-time seasonal and 20 full-time year-round team members. Our businesses normally host tens of thousands of guests on tour each season, most arriving via cruise ship.

Due to the Covid-19 related global shutdown of the cruise industry, during 2020, we did not operate any tour programs. While bills related to fixed expenses continue to arrive each month, the cruise line guests and the revenue they provide have not. We did not fill any of our seasonal positions and we unfortunately were forced to furlough the majority of our 20-person full-time year-round team. 2020 has been a devastating year for our business.

Our story is not unique. Nearly every one of our colleague businesses have suffered the same fate. Our businesses and our community's economic success rely on a healthy, sustainable visitor industry. Cruise tourism has been a major economic driver in Southeast Alaska's economy for decades. Until this year, tourism has been one of the few growth industries not only in Southeast Alaska but the entire state. Arguably, there is no other business segment that has been negatively impacted more than cruise travel, including the businesses that rely on cruise traveler spending for the majority of their revenue. Covid-19's negative impact on the region's economy is deep and we are far from being able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. This is truly a case of extreme hardship for Juneau businesses, particularly those that rely on visitor spending.

No business model is set up to survive extended periods of time without revenue. The long term, sustainable solution is a fully reopened economy and the return of a healthy visitor industry. In the meantime, federal, state and local governments ability to direct Cares Act funds, in the form of financial assistance for Alaska's most impacted businesses, is critical to their survival. The financial aid that has been provided to date is an investment in the future success of our economy. The money being spent now to help businesses survive will be returned many times over by way of future tax revenues, employment opportunities and an increase in overall economic activity by the very businesses that these funds will help to save.

Additional funds are necessary now to help preserve the hundreds of viable visitor industry related businesses until we are able to once again welcome back our customers. Thank you for taking the time to read this and for your consideration of allocating additional grant funds to Juneau businesses in this unprecedented time of extreme hardship.

Sincerely,

Chris Meier  
President  
Alaska Travel Adventures