From: Linda Nicklin
To: Clerks Office
Subject: comments for the VITF
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Dear Visitor Industry Task Force,

Thank you for your work in the difficult task of determining the best level of big cruise ship tourism for maintaining a strong economy in Juneau along with our good quality of life. There is one aspect of big cruise ship tourism that I think needs closer examination. I have worked in tourism for thirty years, and the changes that I have seen in Juneau lead me to believe that we need to take a closer look at the way big cruise ship tourism *harms* our economy. Where do those visitor-spent dollars go, and how does that compare with other industries that may be displaced by the crowding and housing shortages created with a seasonal workforce? My perspective is informed by my own experience, especially working for a company that went from fewer than 10 to more than 100 employees. When numbers were small, our workforce was entirely local hire. It was made up of people at the beginning of their careers, or people working a post-retirement job, with a smattering of schoolteachers and legislative workers making some seasonal dollars. Today the workforce is almost entirely hired from elsewhere. Most come for a season, make their money and leave, contributing little to our overall economy. And the company has to provide housing, so has bought up apartment buildings and condominiums in downtown and West Juneau, taking those units off the general market. How do the economic impacts of those 100 employees compare to 100 employees in a year-round job, in any other industry? I would be interested to see how many of our tourism dollars are leaving Juneau without any benefit to the community. And how much harm is being done by tourism companies buying up available housing?

I believe a modest level of large-cruise-ship tourism benefits Juneau's economy, but a high level does not. I would welcome research on specific economic effects in Juneau: who benefits and who is harmed? These findings could guide planning for the size of Juneau's cruise ship industry or, at a minimum, prompt discussion, negotiation, or legislation to limit its growth. Thank you for your attention!

Linda Nicklin

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