

From: [Sarah Leonard](#)
To: [Sen. Anna MacKinnon](#); [Sen. Pete Kelly](#)
Cc: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Reinvesting in Alaska Tourism Marketing
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2015 1:16:50 PM

Greetings Senators Kelly and MacKinnon,

I am writing you today to ask for your support to restore funding for Alaska's tourism marketing program. I recognize as our elected leaders you are tasked with making tough decisions in the face of Alaska's budget deficit.

As CEO of the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA), an Alaska resident and a working mom, I trust our policy-makers to make these decisions with a mind to wise investments for Alaska's future.

Alaska's visitor industry is a healthy industry because of the State's smart reinvestment in marketing dollars. Due to this commitment to marketing Alaska to the world, many, many business owners, from the cruise industry to lodge owners in rural Alaska to local fishing guides have been able to share our great state with millions of visitors annually.

These visitors spend \$1.8 billion dollars in our state supporting food service businesses, gift shops, transportation and lodging companies as well as tour activities. This economic benefit allows Alaska's business owners to hire people, including Alaska's youth and support their professional development within an industry that encourages them to stay for the long-term. These businesses and attractions are also what makes Alaska and our communities such great places to live and raise our families.

Through a strong tourism industry, Alaska also receives a positive boost to the tune of over \$100 million to our state and local economies via various taxes and fees including the rental car and bed taxes. This infusion of dollars also helps build those resources both visitors and Alaska residents enjoy, like trails, interpretive centers and museums.

I recognize there are no short term and easy fixes in light of Alaska's current budget situation. I hope you will consider restoring funding back to Alaska's tourism marketing program so that our industry can continue to bring economic and quality of life benefits back home to Alaska's families, business owners and communities.

Thank you for your consideration, your service to our state and your commitment to Alaska's tourism industry.

Sarah Leonard

President & CEO

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