



February 2, 2017

Dear Senate Labor & Commerce Committee:

My name is Kirsten Myles, Director of the Cook Inlet Cabaret, Hotel, Restaurant and Retailer's Association (Cook Inlet CHARR), which represents the Municipality of Anchorage's hospitality industry, including its 543 establishments that currently hold liquor licenses.

Under consideration right now is Senate Bill 14, the "Let's Ride Alaska Act" which would which would open up the public transportation market in Alaska to ride-sharing companies like Uber and Lyft.

Cook Inlet CHARR wholeheartedly supports any efforts to improve public transportation for Alaska (and of course for Anchorage's) residents and we appreciate the steps the legislature is taking to ensure responsible service with proper insurance requirements being met.

At recent Anchorage Assembly hearings where this issue of increasing the number of cabs was being heard (and ultimately passed), cab owners and drivers complained that it is not economically feasible to service areas like Eagle River and Girdwood, and that there are already too many cabs on the street and not enough fares to go around. Conversely, consumers testified about unanswered calls, long wait times, excessive fares, cabs in poor condition and subpar overall customer service. Opening up public transportation to ridesharing programs takes care of many of these problems; it allows locals in the Eagle River/Girdwood communities to service their own, puts cabs on notice to maintain decent standards of service and lets the consumers decide what kind of service they want to put their money towards.

Additionally, ridesharing is good for public safety! Separate studies in 2015 by Temple University and Fox School of Business found ride-sharing programs attributed to a reduction in alcohol-related homicides by as much as 5.6% annually (*Entrepreneur 8/25/15*). After banning ride-sharing services Uber & Lyft in 2015, the city of Austin, TX reported a 7.5% increase in DUI's compared to the previous year (*TechDirt 6/17/16*).

Cook Inlet CHARR is always interested in finding ways to improve responsible service and keep our patrons' safe. Improving the potential availability and competitive pricing of transportation services by opening up the market to more rivalry is a positive move and one that we support.

We hope you will move Senate Bill 14 for the betterment of Alaska.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Kirsten Myles'.

Kirsten Myles, IOM
Director, Cook Inlet CHARR