

January 30, 2017

Representative Sam Kito, Chair
Representative Adam Wool, Vice Chair
Representative Andy Josephson
Representative Louise Stutes
Representative Chris Birch
Representative Gary Knopp
Representative Colleen Sullivan-Leonard

Honorable Members of the House Labor and Commerce Committee:

My name is Chelsea Goucher and I am the current Vice President of the Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce. I also serve as President of the Board for Southeast Conference, Southeast Alaska's EDA-designated economic development organization. I am currently employed as an Account Representative for Alaska Marine Lines, but in the past I was employed by the Ketchikan Chamber as Executive Director. I held that position for two years and am intimately acquainted with the Chamber's activities and its importance to the community of Ketchikan and surrounding areas.

I am sharing this testimony to express my whole-hearted support for Representative Dan Ortiz's proposed amendment to House Bill 18: "An Act Relating to Race Classics." His amendment would allow the Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce to raise monies by operating and administering a race classic with their gaming permit, as is currently done by the Seward Chamber with their Mt. Marathon Race Classic. I support in full the letter of support submitted by Bill Swift, current Executive Director of the Ketchikan Chamber, and have just a few points to add concerning the importance to Ketchikan of the monies that might be generated by hosting a race classic such as that provided for in House Bill 18.

The Ketchikan Chamber has undertaken a wide variety of special projects in recent years, including but not limited to: workforce development initiatives, economic and community development programs, fun community events such as the lighting of the town Christmas tree and the July 4th parade, employee wellness trainings, informational programs, networking events to encourage a vibrant economy, assistance to new and developing businesses, hosting special programs such as the Ketchikan Marine Industry Council, fostering the Ketchikan Young Professionals Network, and advocating for a sound business climate for Ketchikan and southeast both in Juneau and Washington, D.C.

These activities are self-funded by the Chamber; we rely on very little grant or government money and depend primarily on member dues and fundraisers to function. The Ketchikan Chamber is a very diverse, non-partisan organization, and has truly helped to make a difference in our community. House Bill 18 would help us sustain these efforts and our ability to serve the community despite decreases in State and local funding. In fact, a race classic would likely attract outside money as racers, their family and friends, sports fans, and residents of Port Townsend—the race's community of origin—vie for a chance to win this newest of race classics.

Thank you for your time, and please consider adoption of House Bill 18 as amended.

Regards,

Chelsea Goucher, Vice President
Greater Ketchikan Chamber of Commerce
cc. Representative Dan Ortiz