



# Municipality of Skagway

GATEWAY TO THE KLONDIKE

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**The Honorable Nick Begich**

153 Cannon House Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20515

**The Honorable Lisa Murkowski**

522 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

**The Honorable Dan Sullivan**

706 Hart Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510

February 27, 2025

**RE: Proposed Tariff on Canadian Goods**

Dear Representative Begich, Senator Murkowski, and Senator Sullivan,

We write to express community concern about a proposed 25% tariff on Canadian goods and how this may impact life and safety in our community.

Skagway's residents depend on Whitehorse, Yukon for not only goods and services such as groceries, but doctor and dentist appointments, veterinary emergencies, propane, and building materials. With frequent inclement winter weather, our remoteness, and limited access to our closest U.S. neighbors, Canadian emergency response can be our only back up for emergency response aid. Thus, our good relationship with our Canadian neighbors is essential to saving lives.

The 110-mile economic, transportation, and resource corridor between Skagway and Whitehorse is a critical connection for our citizens, our government, and our businesses.

The Municipality of Skagway and the Yukon Government have a Memorandum of Understanding to develop a new docking facility for ore and precious mineral export that would foster modern and safe transport for the next 35 years

The proposed 25% tariff on all Canadian goods and the potential Canadian response could result in a crushing increase in the cost of living in our remote community, causing negative impacts to nearly every facet of our community.

The Skagway Borough Assembly requests that our delegation takes Skagway's concerns about a 25% Canadian tariff into consideration as you represent Alaska.

## History and Context

Skagway is a historic Gold Rush town bordered on one side by mountains and a road to Canada

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(the border is 15 miles away), and on the other side by mountains and water. Our only access to neighboring communities is via the state ferry, small planes, and the road to Canada, which then connects to the rest of Alaska and the contiguous United States.

Skagway and the Yukon Territory have a long, intertwined history based on commerce, transportation, shared resources, and comradery. Skagway and the Yukon are connected by the Klondike Highway, the Chilkoot Trail, and the White Pass and Yukon Route Railroad (WPYR).

The historic Chilkoot Trail has been a trade route for thousands of years, connecting the tidewater of the upper Lynn Canal to Lake Bennett and the headwaters of the Yukon River.

The Klondike Highway was completed in the late 1970s and connects Skagway to the Alaska-Canada (AlCan) Highway. 24,060,154 gallons of fuel was transported in 2024 from Skagway's deepwater port north to Whitehorse, Yukon. The transportation flow-through fee for this fuel generated \$547,586.92 to the Municipality's funds and employs 8 people year-round. Freight is transported north and south year-round between Skagway and the AlCan highway, and the Klondike Highway route is the most direct road route from the contiguous United States to the Arctic and interior Alaska.

The White Pass Railroad, completed during the Gold Rush, continues to run from Skagway's docks to Carcross, Yukon with track maintenance to downtown Whitehorse. During World War II, the White Pass Railroad was a critical transportation hub for building the AlCan highway and protecting the U.S. Air Force bases in mainland Alaska during the invasion of the Aleutian Islands.

Over 600,000 people rode the WPYR train in 2024; it is one of the top shore excursions in the world. WPYR is also the largest employer in Skagway and has hauled many millions of tons of ore since its completion in 1900.

Skagway and its Canadian neighbors share a rich history, and the Skagway community values this relationship. Thank you for all you do to protect Alaska communities and for using your influence to help keep our border community of Skagway and its citizens safe, and our historic town economically viable.

Our door is open! We welcome your visit to Skagway this year and hope to see you here soon.

Respectfully,

Steve Burnham Jr,  
*Skagway Borough Clerk*  
On Behalf of the Skagway Borough Assembly