



Alaska Hotel & Lodging Association  
PO Box 241628  
Anchorage, AK 99524

May 7, 2025

The Honorable Calvin Schrage  
The Honorable Neal Foster  
The Honorable Andy Josephson  
Alaska House of Representatives  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representatives Schrage, Foster, and Josephson:

On behalf of the Alaska Hotel & Lodging Association (AkH&LA), thank you for your continued support of Alaska's visitor industry. We appreciate the inclusion of a \$5 million capital appropriation for the Alaska Travel Industry Association (ATIA) in the House Finance Committee Substitute for SB 57 - a \$2.5 million increase over the Senate version of the bill. This is a significant recognition of tourism's role in Alaska's economy and an important commitment to ensuring Alaska remains a competitive global destination.

AkH&LA is Alaska's leading advocacy, education, and trade organization for the hospitality sector, representing more than 75 hotel, lodging, and travel industry businesses from every corner of our state. Our members—small inns, family-owned lodges, and large full-service hotels alike—are united by a common goal: to grow Alaska's hospitality economy and ensure our communities thrive.

While our membership fully recognizes the difficult fiscal choices facing the Legislature this budget cycle, we also believe that few investments can deliver a stronger return for the state than tourism marketing. In 2023 alone, Alaska's visitor industry generated \$5.6 billion in total economic impact, including \$3.9 billion in direct spending, supported 48,000 jobs, and contributed over \$157 million in state revenue. These figures represent full hotel rooms, longer guest stays, bustling restaurants, and vibrant local economies.

ATIA's statewide marketing efforts are directly responsible for keeping Alaska top-of-mind in an increasingly competitive global tourism landscape. In fact, ATIA's 2023 paid media campaign resulted in \$2.1 billion in influenced visitor spending, delivering a \$378 return on every \$1 invested. This reach is indispensable to our industry—and to the economic vibrancy of lodging businesses across the state.

Alaska is a premier tourism destination, but we are not alone in seeking to attract travelers. We compete with other states and other countries that are investing heavily in destination marketing. According to the U.S. Travel Association, other states are spending an average of \$19.6 million per

year on marketing. Without sustained and sufficient investment, Alaska risks falling behind—and with it, go the jobs and revenues our industry delivers.

We respectfully request that the full House Finance Committee support a \$5.0 million capital appropriation in FY26 for tourism marketing activities in both national and international markets. These funds are essential to driving visitors to our communities, and supporting the long-term health of the state's hotel, lodging and hospitality industry.

Thank you again for your consideration and for your continued support of Alaska's visitor industry.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Tia Lewis".

Tia Lewis

Board Chair

Alaska Hotel & Lodging Association