

From: [Jan Tronrud](#)
To: [Senate Finance Committee](#)
Subject: Your consideration is greatly appreciated
Date: Wednesday, April 01, 2015 7:50:24 AM

Dear Senator Kelly and Senator MacKinnon,

Having worked in and participated in tourism my entire life, I am intimately aware of the ramifications unexpected changes to itineraries that take months in the planning. Travel to Southeast Alaska, particularly for the first time traveler, is a complicated and daunting task. Travel to and from certain communities is limited to air and sea, which in turn means travel to and from is at the mercy of the providers of those modes of transportation.

Travelers to Alaska, again, especially first time travelers, start planning more than a year out. With a state so vast, it is impossible to see everything in a traditional two week vacation particularly when you factor in the amount of time spent moving from one's home to Alaska and then from one community to another. People research, talk with friends, family and fellow sojourners about their experiences to be able to come up with reasonable plan of their own. Those that conclude they want to see Southeast Alaska, whether instead of or in addition to, the rest of the state, quickly realize they will have to rely on ferry transportation. All their planning then goes on hold, until the Summer Schedule is released in October for the coming year.

It is only then that they can begin to make reservations for overnight accommodations that are contingent upon their travel plans. It sometimes takes weeks to book their hotels, ferry, plane, and excursions over the winter months because so much of Alaska tourism is seasonal. These eager travelers patiently work their way through the process to come up with an itinerary that has little margin for error because they are so excited and want to see so much of our amazing state. Unexpected ferry delays due to mechanical problems or delays coming out of dry dock in years past have shown us firsthand the dramatic impacts of changing these finely tuned itineraries. For smaller communities, finding accommodations a day earlier or a day later is nearly impossible. Changing ones travel plans from the ferry to utilizing air travel is vastly restricted by the number of seats that serve each of these rural communities, not to mention the financial implications.

As members of the tourism community, we already deal with the reverse in travel dilemmas, when the planes can't fly and people turn to the ferries. However, the capacity of air travel interrupted due to weather compared to the capacity of canceled ferry sailing is dramatically different.

It is also noteworthy, that the downturn in the economy in the last decade was slow to reach the tourism business in Alaska. It is my belief that it was because once people made plans to come, they weren't going to let a little thing diminishing returns in their 401k keep them from their trip of a lifetime. But as the economy lagged, it slowly caught up and the number of independent travelers began to drop. As we are now regaining a foothold on our livelihoods, the prospect of having the ferry schedule slashed makes that expectation for a profitable season, much more unlikely. Slashing the ferry schedule would devastate not only the travelers on their trip of a lifetime, but the Alaska businesses that work so hard to make those trips a success and hence Alaska live up to the reputation she has worked so hard to build.

Thank you for your hard work and consideration. I would be happy to participate in work sessions and teleconferences over the course of the coming months to come up with a more fiscally sound plan for the coming seasons and planning for those schedules commences.

Sincerely,

Jan Marie Tronrud

Innkeeper

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