



ONE SEALASKA PLAZA, SUITE 200 • JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801
TEL (907) 586-1325 • FAX (907) 463-5480 • WWW.AKML.ORG

Member of the National League of Cities and the National Association of Counties

The Honorable Jesse Kiehl, Sponsor, SJR 9
The Honorable Tom McKay, Sponsor, HJR 11
Alaska State Legislature

February 24, 2021

RE: AML Support for HJR 11 and SJR 9 – Urging Exemption for Cruise Ships; Waiver from Passenger Vessel Services Act

Senator Kiehl and Representative McKay,

The Alaska Conference of Mayors (ACoM) passed Resolution 2021.03, encouraging State action in support of economic recovery. ACoM encourages State officials to consider all the tools at their disposal to assist in Alaska's economic recovery. The resolution references the impacts to communities of the lack of cruise ships, including as a result of CDC actions.

As we approach the 2021 cruise ship season, having to take into account the Government of Canada's actions restricting calls, we know that this directly limits the size of cruise ships able to serve Alaska. Alaska's communities that are cruise-dependent – ranging from Ketchikan to Whittier to Denali Borough – experienced incredible hardship this last year. A second year of nonexistent or reduced sailings will exacerbate their challenges. This goes well beyond our advocacy for strengthening local governments – the residents and economies of these communities depend on Alaska's economic recovery.

AML appreciates the resolutions that you have put forward, and your and others' sponsorship. Clearly, Alaska needs Congress to act. We hope for action that addresses Canada's concerns, bypasses Canada's decision by waiving provisions of the Passenger Vessel Services Act, and produces from the CDC guidance that allows for safe operations during this summer's cruise ship season.

We recognize that no matter what, this cruise ship season will look and feel different. There are many also looking at a new normal and what the right level of activity should be for any one community. Those are local decisions that will depend on the opportunity to debate it, not the lack thereof. Communities are preparing for many eventualities, and foremost among them ways to effectively and safely ensure operations. At this point Alaska has a strong track record. Local governments involved in this effort need time to plan and adjust to new circumstances.

We encourage the Legislature to act quickly on these resolutions, and for our Congressional delegation to meet that action with urgency on their side.

Sincerely,

Nils Andreassen
Executive Director



Haines Chamber of Commerce

*"Promoting economic growth and advocating
for the Haines Borough business community"*

219 Main Street, Suite 14
PO Box 1449 · Haines, AK 99827
907-766-2202 · 907-766-2271 (Fax)

director.haineschamber@outlook.com assistant.haineschamber@outlook.com
www.haineschamber.org

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February 17, 2021

The Haines Chamber of Commerce is in full support of Senate Joint Resolution 9, a resolution **"urging the United States Congress to exempt cruise ships from certain provisions of the Passenger Vessel Services Act and other applicable provisions of federal law for the periods during which Canadian ports are closed to cruise ships carrying more than 100 people; and urging the President of the United States not to fine or take actions against cruise ships sailing to the state."**

Canada's recent decision to ban cruise ships in Canadian waters has sent shock waves through the State of Alaska and the Southeast Region, whose economy depends on tourism. It hits even harder here in Haines, as we are a small community in the Southeast that has recently been devastated by flooding and landslides triggered by a record-breaking storm and the overlapping COVID-19 emergency.

As we heal, we must look towards economic recovery to rebuild our future. Tourism is one of the top revenue generating industries for the Haines economy and our community depends on this for their livelihood. There is no doubt that a second missed cruise season will cause irreparable economic damage to our already overwhelmed community.

SJR9 asks the United State Congress and the President to take actions needed for cruise ships to return to Alaskan routes this season. This is our best hope to mitigate the economic blow during the waning months of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sincerely,

Tracey Harmon
Executive Director
Haines Chamber of Commerce



100 E. Marine Way STE 300 Kodiak, Alaska 99615 • (907) 486-5557 • Fax: (907) 486-7605

February 18, 2021

Senate Transportation Committee

RE: Senate Joint Resolution NO. 9

To Whom it May Concern,

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors fully supports Senate Joint Resolution NO. 9 for the urging of the US Congress to exempt cruise ships from certain provisions of the Passenger Vessel Services Act.

Currently, without exemptions, Canadian government decisions effectively prevent an Alaskan cruise season. Exemptions from certain provisions of the Passenger Vessel Services Act, that would be time limited request, would allow cruise ships to waive the requirement of stopping in a foreign port. The United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has published stringent COVID safety protocols for responsible cruising in American waters.

Tourism, including cruise ships are an essential part of many coastal community economies, including Kodiak. Southeast Alaska would lose income from approximately 1,000,000 passengers, with Kodiak losing income from six ships accounting for under 10,000 passengers. Having no cruise ships in 2021 as was the case in 2020 will be devastating for Southeast Alaska and also have an economic impact on Kodiak.

The Kodiak Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors urges passage of Senate Joint Resolution NO. 9.

Yours in economic prosperity,

Sarah Phillips

Sarah Phillips
Executive Director
ChamberDirector@Kodiak.org
(907) 486-5557

Julie Bonney
Julie Bonney (Feb 18, 2021 11:42 AKST)

Julie Bonney
President
jbonney@gci.net






SJR 9 Letter of Support

Final Audit Report

2021-02-18

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