

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE RESOURCES STANDING COMMITTEE**

March 6, 2019

3:30 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Chris Birch, Chair
Senator John Coghill, Vice Chair
Senator Lora Reinbold
Senator Click Bishop
Senator Scott Kawasaki
Senator Jesse Kiehl

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Cathy Giessel

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

PRESENTATION: OUTDOOR RECREATION INDUSTRY: OPEN FOR MORE
BUSINESS

- HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

LEE HART, Founder
Confluence Alaska
Valdez, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of Alaska's outdoor recreation industry.

NOLAN KLOUDA, Executive Director
Center for Economic Development
University of Alaska-Anchorage
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained the economic benefits from the state's outdoor recreation industry.

MICHELE STEVENS, President

Petersville Community Non-Profit Corporation
Petersville, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of the SnowTRAC Program for snowmobile trails in the state.

THOR STACEY, Director of Government Affairs
Alaska Professional Hunters Association
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Provided an overview of Alaska's guided hunting industry.

MIKE HOPPER, Owner
The Lodge at Black Rapids
Black Rapids, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained a development plan for a hiking route from Black Creek to Denali Park.

RHONDA COSTON, Planner
City and Borough of Yakutat
Yakutat, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained the importance of outdoor recreational development in the Yakutat area.

DAN KIRKWOOD, Co-Chair
Visitor Products Working Group
Juneau Economic Development Council
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Addressed the visitor industry in Southeast Alaska.

ACTION NARRATIVE

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CHAIR CHRIS BIRCH called the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting to order at 3:30 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kiehl, Coghill, Reinbold, Kawasaki, Bishop, and Chair Birch.

PRESENTATION: Outdoor Recreation Industry: Open for More Business

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CHAIR BIRCH announced that the committee will hear multiple presentations from Alaska's outdoor industry. He said the presentations' overarching theme is that the Alaska outdoor

industry is an important and growing contributor to the state's economy that is open for more business.

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LEE HART, Founder, Confluence Alaska, Valdez, Alaska, provided her background information in the adventure travel marketing industry. She said her intent is to explain how Confluence Alaska will focus on building Alaska's future outdoor recreation economy on behalf of more than 500 stakeholder businesses and organizations across the state. The outdoor recreation industry is a powerful economic sector that continues to gather statewide momentum.

She addressed milestones for Alaska's outdoor recreation industry as follows:

- Fall 2018:
 - The Federal Bureau of Economic Analysis released data on the U.S. outdoor recreation economy:
 - \$416 billion,
 - 2.2 percent of GDP,
 - Larger than pharmaceuticals,
 - Outpacing growth in many sectors including the overall economy.
 - University of Alaska report:
 - Alaska grown outdoor product manufactures including success stories from uniquely Alaskan user-inspired innovations.
- January 2019:
 - The State Association of Public Health Professionals:
 - Passed a resolution recognizing the value of outdoor recreation to public health.
- Spring 2019:
 - Report by eight states on the value of investing in trails.

She said virtually every community and economic masterplan in Alaska calls for greater outdoor recreation infrastructure development. Trails and outdoor groups provide thousands of hours of voluntary labor to build and maintain summer and winter trails. In the past four years voters in Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley voted overwhelmingly to tax themselves to create more outdoor and recreation infrastructure. Alaskans have been asking for more of the close to home access to surrounding public lands and waterways.

MS. HART noted that the Klondike Gold Rush, Glacier Bay, and Denali national parks attract the majority of visitors to Alaska's national parks. She asked committee members to imagine the jobs and business opportunities that would benefit the many gateway communities to the state's other 21-national parks, 16-national wildlife refuges, multiple national forests, Bureau of Land Management sites, and state parks.

She said the increased interest in outdoor recreation development has led to Confluence Alaska being invited to speak at conferences that includes: the Alaska Planner's Association, Juneau's Innovation Summit, the Alaska Municipal League, and the Alaska Travel Industry Association.

She opined that there is broad-based bipartisan support for outdoor recreation at the federal level. U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski has championed greater investment in recreation development and catching up on deferred maintenance on public lands. The landmark Natural Resources Management Act recently passed 92 to 8 in the Senate and 363 to 62 in the House.

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She stated that her colleagues during the overview will prove the value of Alaska's outdoor recreation industry as follows:

- An invaluable user-financed program the benefits everyone in the state.
- The state should do its part to keep federal support flowing to help restore wildlife and sportfishing habitat, build new trails for motorized and nonmotorized users, and create all manner of outdoor recreation projects through the newly passed and permanently reauthorized Land and Water Conservation Fund.

She summarized that Confluence Alaska has sent a letter to the governor, Commissioner Anderson for the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development; and Commissioner Feige for the Alaska Department of Natural Resources asking for an examination in ways in which the state might pursue potential regulatory relief that would allow Alaska to create more community close to home trails as well as businesses on the state's public lands.

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NOLAN KLOUDA, Executive Director, Center for Economic Development, University of Alaska-Anchorage, Anchorage, Alaska,

announced that the Center for Economic Development is releasing a report with the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development on outdoor recreation and economic development in Alaska. The outdoor recreation industry on the national level annually contributes \$400 billion to the national economy.

MR. KLOUDA detailed that the outdoor recreation report from the Center for Economic Development's reveals the following:

- 12 activities accounted for the majority outdoor recreation, including:
 - Hunting,
 - Fishing,
 - Hiking,
 - Motorized activities.
- Data tallying example:
 - Kenai River fishing trip from Anchorage results in gas, food, lodging, and charter boat purchases, the Center tallied the results for residents and visitors combined.
 - \$3.2 billion is spent on outdoor recreation trips.
 - 38,000 jobs were created from the outdoor recreation trips spending:
 - Greater than 1 in 10 jobs in the state.
 - Significant industry for Alaska in terms of employment.
 - Note:
 - Gear purchased for recreation trips is not counted because the Center does not have a good data source.

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He said how the money is spent on outdoor recreation and how it contributes to the state economy is only one facet. Quality of life is another aspect that makes a place attractive to a skilled workforce. Increasingly in economic development around the country, states, regions, and municipalities compete to attract talent.

He noted that Alaska's business leaders tend to say in surveys that one of the biggest challenges that holds them back is not having enough workers. Alaska has a small labor force that requires amenities to attract people. According to a University of Alaska-Fairbanks study, 60 percent of residents said one of the big reasons they live in Alaska is because of opportunities for outdoor recreation and that is one of the big draws to

living in the state. Outdoor recreation is an asset that can keep people in Alaska that contributes to the economy as well as attracting people to the state; that is the focus of efforts like the Choose Juneau by the Juneau Economic Development Council or the Live, Work, Play initiative by the Anchorage Economic Development Corporation to retain a workforce.

MR. KLOUDA pointed out that the VF Corporation, parent company of Smartwool, The North Face and other brands, recently moved its headquarters to Colorado largely because the type of people who work at their company are the kind of people who like to play outside and being in Colorado is a great way to attract the right kind of a workforce, the right kind of people to work there, so there are lessons in that.

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He said another aspect is the way that outdoor recreation can be a stimulus for entrepreneurship. Alaska has several leading companies in the state that either make or design outdoor recreation gear that is known nationally, recognized brands like 907 Clothing Company or Heather's Choice, a startup company that makes freeze-dried foods. The state has real assets in the entrepreneurship sector as far as the marketability of Alaska. Companies can boast Made in Alaska or Tested in Alaska. The state of Idaho had a Tested in Idaho effort to elevate the Idaho brand of outdoor recreation, something that would feel a little truer in Alaska.

SENATOR KIEHL asked him to expand on his statement that outdoor recreation contributes 38,000 jobs to the state's economy. He asked if the number of jobs would include a zipline business that would see a lot of tourists during the summer or a summer dogsledding excursion.

MR. KLOUDA replied that tour and recreation companies are included and tend to be a large source of outdoor recreation jobs. Accommodations and food service are other big categories.

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SENATOR KIEHL asked him how many of the outdoor recreation jobs are seasonal versus year-round.

MR. KLOUDA admitted that seasonal employment is a factor in outdoor recreation jobs. Most seasonal jobs are during the summer, but employment is broadening out as winter tourism becomes more popular. The average in outdoor recreation jobs is \$50,000, roughly equivalent to the state average.

SENATOR BISHOP addressed the Center for Economic Development report that Alaska ranks first in the U.S. for outdoor recreation participation. He opined that the state gets bad press for low rankings in other categories. He suggested that the Center and legislators need to be bragging more that Alaska is number one for outdoor participation and the story needs to be out there.

MR. KLOUDA concurred with Senator Bishop and said the data supports that outdoor participation is part of the Alaska lifestyle.

SENATOR COGHILL asked him if the state's transportation infrastructure needed to support outdoor recreation has been addressed.

MR. KLOUDA replied that the report's focus is on improving trails and access points, but transportation is not a focus area in the report.

SENATOR COGHILL opined that someone may be addressing how to improve aviation and ground transportation for outdoor recreation.

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MS. HART replied that Senator Coghill's question is hard to answer, but the state's aviation industry is part of the outdoor recreation sector.

SENATOR COGHILL asked if emergency services to properly support outdoor recreation has been taken into consideration.

MS. HART noted that individuals in Valdez with computer backgrounds are working on using the state's geographic information services (GIS) to help people better navigate the back country.

SENATOR COGHILL explained that legislators continually ponder the state's rescue services due to their high cost.

MS. HART concurred and noted other states are looking at mechanisms for emergency services that are user financed to help offset expenses, something that the industry might bring forward to the Legislature.

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SENATOR COGHILL explained that he is bringing up emergency services because legislators want to support increased outdoor recreation, but people will be reluctant to do that if an emergency response might be too late. He said there must be a communication-transportation-safety link.

SENATOR REINBOLD noted her past involvement in a trail management plan process in trying to get a green belt designation for the Iditarod Trail. She asked if Confluence Alaska could assist with the project.

MS. HART answered yes. She reiterated that Confluence Alaska has forwarded a letter to state government officials to examine the state's trail regulations and the interpretation of the trail regulations to find if there is a way to move forward and make the process easier.

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SENATOR REINBOLD remarked about the challenge she faced in building trails in areas near schools, campgrounds, and neighborhoods where a priority is given bears rather than trail development.

MS. HART replied that Confluence Alaska sympathizes with Senator Reinbold's frustration with trail development.

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MICHELE STEVENS, President, Petersville Community Non-Profit Corporation, Petersville, Alaska, explained that the Snowmobile Trails Advisory Council was established under Title 41 in 1997 through the Offices of the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation with the mission to fairly represent all Alaskans by advising the Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation on snowmobile issues including funding, safety, registration, education, access, trail grooming, marking and development, and maintenance.

She detailed that AS 28.39.020 authorizes the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to collect snowmobile and off-road vehicle registration fees. The statute does not state what the fees will go towards, however since inception the promise and understanding was that DMV would transfer all fees generated to the Department of Natural Resources, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation, thus creating a SnowTRAC program.

She explained that the SnowTRAC is funded through a self-imposed user tax, or snowmobile registration fee. The program is self-

sustaining due to reoccurring registration fees collected from DMV. SnowTRAC is a revenue neutral program that users asked for and fund out of their own registration dollars. Twelve percent of the funds cover the cost of state employees administering the program and administrative costs. She emphasized that SnowTRAC is not asking for a handout or any funds from the state budget.

MS. STEVENS said at the time SnowTRAC was initiated, snowmobilers were advocating for recreation, transportation, and subsistence use. There were very few marked and maintained snowmobile trails. The consequences were high accident rates, lost people on snowmobiles that results in search and rescue costs to the state, winter conflicts among trail users, and conflicts with private property owners.

She noted that the SnowTRAC program has been a success for snowmobile trail development. More land is being purchased and cabins are being built because of the ease and safety of the trail system. Snowmobilers spend hundreds of thousands of dollars in Alaska's winter economy which otherwise would be slow. Winter tourism is on the rise because of groomed snowmobile trails. An average snowmobiler spends \$20,000-\$50,000 in a season. A recent study by Earth Economics found that for every dollar spent on public open space in the Mat-Su Valley Borough resulted in a \$5.31 return on investment.

She opined that groomed snowmobile trails have kept the state's cost for search and rescue to a minimum because riders are less likely to get lost on trails. Trails help first responders get to the backcountry in an expedient manner thus helping the victim sooner.

She summarized that snowmobile trails are multi-use that benefits dogsledding, hikers, fat-tire bikers, and skiers. The SnowTRAC program benefits all Alaskans and anyone who wants to enjoy all that Alaska has to offer in the winter. SnowTRAC saves lives, promotes safety, stimulates the economy, and creates jobs. Without the SnowTRAC program, Alaska will be devastated and closed for business in the winter.

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CHAIR BIRCH noted that he is a frequent user of the Big Lake snowmobile trails. He opined that, "It's the best bang for the buck the state of Alaska gets on anything as far as the dollars spent with the volunteer service and support of the communities around the state." He said there are a lot of people that do not

understand the Iron Dog Race lays the trail out for the Iditarod.

MS. STEVENS noted that the Big Lake Trails grooms the trails for the Iron Dog, Iditarod, and numerous dog races.

SENATOR REINBOLD said snowmobile trails are important, including public safety benefits for first responder access.

SENATOR BISHOP asked how many miles of groomed trails Alaska has and how many groomed trails do other states and Canadian provinces have.

MS. STEVENS answered that Alaska had 200 miles in 1997 and currently there is 2,000 miles of groomed trails.

SENATOR BISHOP asked what other states have for groomed trails.

MS. STEVENS answered that she does not know.

SENATOR BISHOP suggested that she know how many miles of groomed trails there are in other states and provinces for upcoming public commentary in Senate Finance.

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THOR STACEY, Director of Government Affairs, Alaska Professional Hunters Association, Anchorage, Alaska, said guiding hunters in Alaska is probably the original outdoor recreational industry. Guided hunting is a mature industry in Alaska and some of the issues that the industry has are analogous to challenges that some of the newer opportunities are going to have in the future. He specified that hunting guides are professionally licensed in Alaska, noting that he has been a registered and active guide for the past 20 years.

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He explained what a hunting guide does as follows:

- Activities include:
 - Cooking,
 - Cleaning,
 - Packing animals,
 - Judging animals,
 - Preserving meat,
 - Preserving trophies.
- Provides a high-quality-interpretive experience typically over a 7 to 10-day period in the Alaska wilderness.

- Hunting guides must:
 - Be competent in CPR,
 - Handle animals,
 - Know the weather,
 - Know the laws and regulations of how to conduct a legal hunt.
- Clients tend to be non-resident hunters who don't know much about Alaska.

MR. STACEY explained that the guided hunting industry's foundation is the guided-required species. A hunting guide had to be retained by non-residents to hunt any animal during the territorial days. After statehood the Legislature required hunting guides to hunt Dall Sheep, brown bears or grizzly bears, and mountain goats.

He said the reason for the requirements to hire a guide is the difficulty of the terrain, safety aspects, search and rescue, and some of the inherent issues with going after the largest land carnivore, the brown bears and grizzly bears. The resource represents a significant value nationally and internationally.

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He addressed economic impacts of guided hunting in Alaska:

- Total economic output for the guide industry in 2015 was \$87.2 million.
- New dollars from outside spending accounted for \$52 million.

He addressed "meat sharing" from guided hunting as follows:

- Not just about economic opportunity.
- Very small amount would qualify as animals being turned into dollars.
- Guides share high quality, wild protein across the state.
- In one year, hunting guides shared 230,000 pounds of game meat.

He addressed supporting wildlife conservation as follows:

- The guided hunting industry supports the management of the state-owned resource.
- Alaskans own the wildlife.

- Non-residents pay elevated fees for hunting licenses and for hunting tags.
- Non-resident hunters account for 13 percent of the hunter effort but contribute 72 percent of the money to the Division of Wildlife for wildlife management.

MR. STACEY detailed the guided hunting industry's microeconomics as follows:

- 300 contracting guides in the state.
- In 2012:
 - 152 guided hunters were Alaska residents,
 - 3,055 guided hunters were non-residents.
- 46 percent of the revenue occurred on state lands, the remainder on federal lands.
- 89 percent of guided hunting businesses are Alaskan owned.

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He pointed out the guided hunting industry's future risks and opportunities as follows:

- Risks:
 - Loss of state management authority:
 - Diminishment in the wildlife resource.
 - Guided hunting is a resource dependent business.
 - Wildlife conservation for the resource's health comes first.
 - Loss of critical non-resident allocation:
 - Reliance of non-resident allocation at the Board of Game level.
 - Thirteen percent of the state's hunters are non-resident, but only three percent are guided hunting clients.
 - Small changes in resident allocation at the Board of Game has a significant impact on the guided hunting industry:
 - Many of the guide businesses guide between five to seven clients a year.

He addressed opportunities as follows:

- Support for concessions or a lease structure on state lands:
 - Industry can survive drawing hunt schemes.
 - Adds value to the resource.

- o Provides predictable opportunity on an annual basis.
- o Derive benefit from a limited amount of opportunity.
- o Incentivizes stewardship:
 - The public, who owns the resource, is not going to want to see the industry's use continue without stewardship.
- Improve relationship with native corporation lands as follows:
 - o Alaska Native Claims Settlement (ANCSA) corporations hold many millions of acres, most not open to guides.
 - o Work with ANCSA corporations to provide opportunities for the rural economy.
 - o Improving relationship involves trust.

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CHAIR BIRCH asked if hunting guides share bear meat.

MR. STACEY answered that statewide bear meat sharing is limited, except for Prince of Wales Island in Southeast Alaska. He pointed out that bear meat can have trichinosis and must be handled correctly. He noted that bears are omnivores, so their diet varies which impacts the meat's taste.

SENATOR REINBOLD asked if Mr. Stacey has suggestions on controlling bear populations in urban areas for public safety reasons.

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MR. STACEY suggested that the solution is to develop a working group that puts together a management plan that addresses the community's value on wildlife pertaining to killing bears within city limits. He added that trash and habituation measures must be addressed as well. He said there are excellent examples from communities around the state that have been challenged by bears but have successfully dealt with them to benefit of children, private property owners, and ultimately the animal themselves.

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MIKE HOPPER, Owner, The Lodge at Black Rapids, Black Rapids, Alaska, detailed that he organized an exploratory hike from Black Rapids, which is located on the Richardson Highway in Isabel Pass, to Denali Park. He noted that he watched guys race from Black Rapids to Denali Park in the Wilderness Classic and figured walking the route was possible.

He explained that he organized a team in August 2018 to see if it is possible to find a doable backpacking route from Black

Rapids to Denali Park. He opined that the proposed route is a hidden resource that is awe inspiring with nothing comparable in the U.S. and rivals anything in the world. He admitted that obstacles need to be addressed for safety purposes, specifically river crossings and white out conditions from low clouds.

MR. HOPPER disclosed that after his trip he immediately got in touch with the Interior Delegation and shared photographic and video footage from the experience. He said the delegation suggested that he meet with legislators and that is the reason why he is meeting with committee members to see what it would take to develop the route.

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SENATOR BISHOP asked if Mr. Hopper packed a raft for his expedition.

MR. HOPPER answered no. He opined that bringing a raft would not have helped.

SENATOR BISHOP stated that what Mr. Hopper did was remarkable and said he was envious. He asked that Mr. Hopper note what Harry Karstens and Walter Harper did, [first climbers to ascend Mt. Denali in 1913.]

MR. HOPPER replied that he has the utmost admiration for the noted climbers, pointing out that they did not have light-weight gear.

SENATOR REINBOLD asked to confirm that Mr. Hopper's hike was on the eastern Alaska Range.

MR. HOPPER answered yes.

SENATOR REINBOLD suggested that Mr. Hopper meet with Alaska Trails.

MR. HOPPER replied that he is meeting with Alaska Trails the following week.

CHAIR BIRCH asked if the Cantwell Glacier is near Black Rapids.

MR. HOPPER answered yes.

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MS. HART announced that she will speak on behalf of Alaska Trails. She said Chris Beck, Secretary for Alaska Trails, was

unable to attend. She explained that Mr. Beck is the ringleader for an effort by eight trail entities, including the Iditarod National Historic Area, to look at close to home trails and long-distance-through trails for their value to residents and visitors.

MS. HART explained that Alaska Trails addressed the impact of keeping visitors one day longer and its value to the state from trails. A conservative estimate is that one day longer would add up to \$137 million of benefit to the Alaska economy if half of the visitors stayed one more day.

She said Confluence Alaska is compiling a report that will provide case studies demonstrating the transformative power when communities and countries consciously choose to invest in outdoor recreation. Outdoor-recreation-based tourism revitalized the former timber town of Bend, Oregon and the former uranium mining town of Moab, Utah. New focus is being placed on the coal mining state of West Virginia. At a recent innovation summit tourism representatives from Iceland talked about how a focus on attracting visitors to their unique natural offerings saved their country from the economic collapse of 2008.

She said the report due out in spring 2019 will provide local and state planners with information on why investing in outdoor recreation is a wise choice. Every dollar spent in trail development generates anywhere from \$5 to \$13.

SENATOR REINBOLD noted that resistance occurs with any project. She said there is a clear economic increase from trails that are close to home.

MS. HART concurred with Senator Reinbold, noting that she has data to support her statement.

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RHONDA COSTON, Planner, City and Borough of Yakutat, Yakutat, Alaska, disclosed that she has been the planner in Yakutat for five years and her field of study was outdoor recreation management. She provided her background information to committee members.

She said Yakutat is known as a sport fishing and surfing destination, but other exciting outdoor adventure opportunities that are less unknown exist.

MS. COSTON noted that Yakutat is the gateway to national and state parks and forests. She opined that developed recreation and improved visitor services will improve the quality of life for residents and encourage visitation to the Yakutat area resulting in improved small business development opportunities.

She explained that Yakutat's goal is to extend its existing infrastructure in the shoulder seasons by promoting the area as an outdoor recreation destination. She stated that outdoor recreation is an emerging economic driver that open a world of future opportunities for Yakutat. She emphasized that, Yakutat is open for more business.

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DAN KIRKWOOD, Co-Chair, Visitor Products Working Group, Juneau Economic Development Council, Juneau, Alaska, disclosed that he is also a guide and the general manager of Pack Creek Bear Tours that, a business committed to safe and informative interactions with brown bears.

He said the Juneau Economic Development Council has a working group that has been convened since 2011, originally as part of the U.S. Forest Service's desire to move forward and support diverse industries. The working group is looking to find opportunities to enhance visitor industry growth, address the needs of the industry, and to address conflicts and issues. The working group has become an important source of advocacy for visitor industry in Southeast Alaska to speak to the industry's issues and work with the U.S. Forest Service as well as the state.

He disclosed that one of the things the working group realized is the incredible brand Alaska has. He opined that Alaska is a world class brand that is unmatched. He said a person can go anywhere in the world and say Alaska and people will know what the meaning is, and that is why visitors are coming to the state.

He said the good news for the visitor industry in Southeast Alaska is that 1.3 million people are expected to visit on cruise ships. According to Southeast Conference, employment in the visitor industry sector from 2014-2017 is up 12 percent with earnings up 23 percent. During the great recession the visitor industry brought over \$1 billion in economic activity to Southeast Alaska alone.

MR. KIRKWOOD said the visitor industry in Southeast Alaska is not just cruise ships. Air travel visitation during 2014-2017 was up 15 percent, a sector that includes hunters, the people going to fishing lodges, and the independent traveler that is spending more in hotels, restaurants, and communities.

He opined that the focus must be on making sure that the visiting experience remains great for both the locals and visitors alike.

He asserted that the state has an unparalleled resource of scenery, fish, and wildlife that is very much the basis of the visitor industry. Alaska is unlike anything in the world and that is certainly the state's competitive advantage.

He summarized to continue the visitor industry's growth in a good way and to focus on keeping the experience great, accomplishments must be measured to know what is being accomplished.

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SENATOR KIEHL commended Mr. Kirkwood for some of the work he and his team did to reduce lead times for permits in the Tongass National Forest for recreational businesses.

CHAIR BIRCH shared a travel story and concurred with Mr. Kirkwood on the Alaska brand.

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At ease.

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CHAIR BIRCH called the committee back to order.

MS. HART summarized that the outdoor recreation industry is not asking for money, but asking for opportunity to be, more open for business. She reiterated that the governor has been asked to create a blue ribbon task force to look at ways to open the door even further for the outdoor recreation industry by reducing the burden for business owners to help others explore Alaska and to make it easier for community-based trail groups who have the funding and manpower to create close to home trails that are community assets and visitor attractions.

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She provided a video presentation on the importance of the outdoor recreation industry in Alaska.

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There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Birch adjourned the Senate Resources Standing Committee meeting at 4:48 p.m.