

SJR

62

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date referred: 3/29/88

FURTHER REFERRALS:

Finance

DATE: 4-26-88

The Health, Education and Social Services Committee has considered SJR 62

Relating to making state facilities and national parks in Alaska accessible to visitors.

RECOMMENDS:

- replace with HCS SJR 62 (HESS) the same title
- attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

- fiscal impact same as previous fiscal note published _____
- zero fiscal note same as previous zero fiscal note published _____
- zero with analysis same as previous zero fiscal note published _____

SIGNING DO PASS:

[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]
[Signature]

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

[Signature] - No Rec.
[Signature] (Because of Fiscal Note) No Rec.

[Signature]
 Co-Chairman's signature
[Signature]

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

POUCH Y - STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
907-465-3800

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May, 1988

Copies of minutes listed below were originally included in this file. The minutes are available on the STAIRS database CMPR. In order to save space copies of minutes have not been left in the files.

Mary Van Nimwegen

HHESS

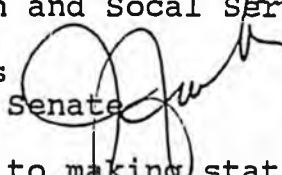
4-26-88

8:30 a.m.

April 14, 1988

MEMORANDUM

TO: Representative Johnny Ellis, Co-Chairman
Health, Education and Social Services Committee

FROM: Senator Jan Faiks 
President of the Senate

SUBJECT: SJR 62, Relating to making state facilities
and national parks in Alaska accessible to
visitors

Currently Senate Joint Resolution 62 is before the House Committee on Health, Education and Social Services. I am the sponsor of this legislation.

SJR 62 requests that the Governor direct appropriate state agencies to examine ways to make state facilities more accessible to elderly and handicapped visitors, and it also requests that the state work with the federal government to see that the National Park Service carries out its mandate to provide barrier-free access to national parks in Alaska.

There is a \$35,000 fiscal note which would provide funding to be awarded as a grant by the Division of Tourism to research and promote Alaska as a tourism destination for the physically challenged.

It would be most appreciated if you could schedule this resolution before the Committee at your earliest possible convenience. If I can provide any further information please let me know.

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: Making state facilities
and parks accessible to visitors
Sponsor: _____
Requestor: _____

Agency Affected: Dept. of Commerce
BRU: Tourism
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS		35.0				
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING		35.0				

CAPITAL						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

REVENUE						
---------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND		35.0				
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL		35.0				

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

These funds shall be awarded as a grant by the Division of Tourism to research and promote Alaska as a tourism destination for the physically challenged.

Prepared by: _____ Phone: 465-4958
Division: Senator Rick Halford, Co-chairman Date: March 28, 1988
Senate Finance Committee
Approved by Commissioner: _____ Date: _____
Agency: _____

Distribution (by preparer):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: _____
Title: SJR 62 Relating to making State facilities available to visitors.
Sponsor: Faiks
Requestor: Senate HESS

Agency Affected: Natural Resources
BRU: _____
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING						

CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
---------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
---------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

An examination of state facilities for visitor accesibility may have fiscal impact; however, passage of this resolution will have no fiscal impact.

Prepared by: Lawrence Z. Ostrovsky Phone: 465-2400
Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 3/7/88

Approved by Commissioner: Denise Gorsuch Date: 3/7/88
Agency: Department of Natural Resources

Distribution (by preparer):

- Legislative Finance
- Legislative Sponsor
- Requestor
- Office of Management and Budget
- Impacted Agency(ies)

REQUEST: FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date:
Title: Relating to making state facilities and national parks
accessible
Sponsor: Faiks
Requestor

Agency Affected: DOT&PF
BRU:
Components: Engineering &
Operations Standards

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	0	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	0	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTURAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES	0	0	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	0	0	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

GENERAL FUND	0	0	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	0	0

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

The department fully supports and endorses this resolution. See attached analysis sheet for assumptions and further discussions

Prepared by: Rod Wilson, Design Mng. II
Division: Engineering and Operations Standards

Phone: 465-2951
Date: 3/4/88

Approved by Commissioner: *[Signature]*
Agency: Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Date: 3/4/88

Distribution (by preparer):
Legislative Finance
Legislative Sponsor
Requestor
Office of Management and Budget
Impacted Agency(ies)

MAR 8 1988

LEGISLATIVE FINANCE

Fiscal Note Analysis For:

Resolution No. 62 pertaining to handicapped accessibility to national parks and visitor facilities.

Prepared by:

Rod Wilson, Engineering and Operations Stnds., DOT&PF
3/3/88

Assumptions concerning construction costs:

- (1) It is assumed that all accessibility improvements to national parks in Alaska shall be funded from federal sources.
- (2) Special funding for accessibility improvements to state owned parks and tourist oriented facilities is not anticipated under the scope of this resolution.
- (3) It is assumed that all accessibility improvements to state owned or leased facilities will occur in conjunction with otherwise funded construction or maintenance activities.

Discussion concerning the examination of ways to improve access:

With the passage of SB 118 by the Legislature in 1987 the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities was authorized to :

"...determine the extent of, and adopt regulations setting the standards for access to and use of the public building or facility...if the standards...are not provided for in federal law, regulation, or standards."

In response, the department has developed draft regulations, conformance procedures, and design criteria applicable to (among other facilities) boat harbor and docking facilities, public trails, parks and playgrounds, campgrounds and picnic areas, ski facilities, safe water facilities, and documents available to other agencies that design recreation facilities such as the Division of Parks, Department of Natural Resources.

Challenge Alaska
Anchorage, Alaska

FY1989 Preliminary Plan
ALASKAN TRAVEL AND RECREATION FOR THE PHYSICALLY CHALLENGED:
AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL

PREPARED BY:
PAUL TODD ENTERPRISES
P.O. Box 105055
Anchorage AK 99510-5055
(907) 272-8600

In cooperation with:
Challenge Alaska staff, board members and volunteers

February, 1988

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CHALLENGE ALASKA PHILOSOPHY

Challenge Alaska believes that everyone, regardless of physical ability, should have an equal opportunity to engage in diverse recreational activities.

Exhilarating physical recreation is a crucial aspect of early rehabilitation and lifelong well-being. It is an important track to improved mobility, increased self-confidence and development of specific skills.

These benefits, in turn, promote employment opportunities, social integration, spiritual peace and physical independence.

HISTORICAL SUMMARY

Alaska Handicapped Sports & Recreation Association (AHSRA) was created in 1981 to provide an adaptive ski program at Alyeska Resort, Anchorage.

Although Alpine (downhill) skiing remains our strongest program, outdoor recreation opportunities now include leisure trips to local special events; sea kayaking; wilderness camping; cross-country skiing; wheelchair basketball; fishing trips, dog sled tours, canoeing; competitive events and fitness classes.

Our name was changed to Challenge Alaska in 1986 to place our emphasis on the positive: to seek out and meet challenges, rather than cope with "disabilities."

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Alaskans are meeting the challenge of enjoying their outdoors in many ways: individually, with friends and relatives, and through trips and programs run by Challenge Alaska and other agencies. Physically challenged Alaskans, and the agencies which serve them, have a substantial body of knowledge about travel and outdoor recreation in our state.

This project is intended to share those challenges, and the "just plain fun" we have living, traveling and recreating here, with other challenged Americans -- and visitors to Alaska from all over the world!

Visitors to Alaska -- 787,000 in 1986 -- spent \$727 million while traveling in our state. These visitors are one of the most valuable of our renewable economic resources, and they are critical. Visitor development, including the challenged visitor market, is one of the economic keys we must turn to open the door to a brighter future.

Some 36 million Americans experience disabilities. As with other Americans, leisure and recreation are important to the quality of their lives. As an example of their importance to the travel trade, United Airlines found that a half million disabled travelers pass through their hub in Chicago each year. These travelers represent a large, and largely ignored, group of potential visitors to Alaska.

However, in its contacts with disabled travelers, Challenge Alaska has found many of them believe Alaska is far less accessible than other major visitor destinations. Challenge Alaska's own access studies of public recreation facilities in Southcentral Alaska support this view. Although Alaska is increasingly accessible to the able-bodied visitor, much work remains to make travel in Alaska attractive to visitors with physical disabilities.

This project, then, has two major goals:

- 1) Expand and improve travel and outdoor recreation opportunities in Alaska for Alaskans and visitors who are physically challenged -- that is, those who experience a disability.

- 2) Bring greater economic benefits to Alaskans through development of this new visitor market.

Because we cannot realistically expect to receive benefits without investing resources, we must have a third goal:

3) Generate sufficient resources, through service contracts, grants, fees, commissions, memberships, donated funds, goods or services, volunteer work and other means, to maintain a continuing program.

The text which follows summarizes the proposed programs of challenged visitor development and services. Funding needs to get a running start in Fiscal Year 1989, beginning July 1, 1988, are estimated. Major steps in each program proposed in FY 1989 are listed. As with any new program, substantial revisions of the plan should be expected during the first stages of implementation. The FY 1990 plan will be based on substantial experience in starting up the program.

Alaska places a very high value on developing its visitor resource. This is just part of a broader program of economic development to provide jobs for Alaskans, and revenues to pay for needed public programs. The perceived need is brought into sharper focus by the recent losses of oil-fueled economic activity.

Development of the challenged visitor resource should become part of Alaska's overall visitor development strategy. Challenge Alaska, in cooperation with related handicap agencies and the travel trade, proposes to initiate such a program and integrate it with existing systems for the benefit of both visitors and Alaskans.

Challenge Alaska is funded by the Alaska Division of Parks & Outdoor Recreation in FY88 in the amount of \$35,000. These funds support our existing recreation programs. We are proposing a more comprehensive project for FY89 at the state funding level of \$95,000. This would include continuation of recreation programs in Southcentral Alaska; expansion of these programs to the Interior and Southeast Alaska; and initiation of several new programs to stimulate travel in Alaska by physically challenged visitors.

Finally, through our participation and cooperation in the Alaska travel trade, Challenge Alaska expects to create new employment opportunities. In the United States, 65% of the adults who experience a disability are unemployed. Yet they are valuable resources in developing a new market for challenged visitors to Alaska. The skills of Alaskans experiencing disabilities will be put to work in serving these new visitors.

CHALLENGE ALASKA

PROPOSAL TO DIVISION OF STATE PARKS & OUTDOOR RECREATION

FY1989 BUDGET RECAP

SALARIES.....	\$29,250
FRINGE.....	5,709
TRAVEL.....	4,150
FACILITIES.....	6,450
SUPPLIES.....	4,541
EQUIPMENT.....	4,600
CONTRACT SERVICES.....	29,800
OTHER.....	10,500

TOTALS.....\$95,000

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

GOALS:

1. Facilitate travel and outdoor recreation in Alaska by all physically challenged visitors.
2. Bring economic benefits to Alaskans (both disabled and non-disabled) through development of this new visitor market.
3. Generate sufficient resources, through service contracts, grants, fees, commissions, memberships, donated funds, goods or services, volunteer work and other means, to maintain a continuing program.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Obtain funding for startup phase of project; as part of startup, revise project plan for FY89 in line with funding level.
2. Continue to provide outdoor recreation activities. Develop demonstration activities to test their marketability and to stimulate the interest of private vendors in replacing Challenge Alaska as the operator of these activities wherever possible.
3. Develop and maintain research program on challenged visitor market, including elderly with limited mobility.
4. Promote Anchorage and Alaska as destinations for these visitors.
5. Facilitate travel planning for such visitors with materials, information services, reservation services and other appropriate means.
6. Create new job opportunities for Alaskans experiencing a disability in the travel trade.
7. Develop and maintain ongoing relationships within the travel trade so as to facilitate challenged visitor development.
8. Provide disability awareness or other needed training to front line visitor related employees.
9. Develop ongoing financial support through grants, contracts, memberships, donated funds, donated goods, donated services or other means.
10. Examine feasibility of charging fees or obtaining commissions for provision of training, materials, or travel consulting services to the travel trade.
11. Recruit and train volunteers to support this program as appropriate.
12. Provide information on tax breaks and other financial advantages of providing increased accessibility in private accommodations and visitor related facilities.

PROGRAM #1:
FUNDING/STARTUP

DESCRIPTION:

This preliminary plan describes possible activities of challenged visitor promotion and service. At present Challenge Alaska has three employees and seasonal staff; allocation of significant resources to this project could only detract from existing programs designed to serve physically challenged Alaskans. Although volunteers from the community certainly can assist with many of the work activities, a full time equivalent Challenge Alaska staff position is indicated at startup. The number of travel products, companies, products and destinations involved in marketing and providing services to Alaska visitors make it a highly complex business. Adding further complexity is a need for the staff to understand physical handicaps; knowledge of assessment and design of facilities and programs to make Alaska travel more accessible; and how to connect to the existing network of handicap agencies.

Challenge Alaska will consider various methods of staffing the project for maximum efficiency, including the use of interns for tasks at which they can be effective but need not have the depth of knowledge required for staff; and recruiting, training and utilizing community volunteers with skills useful on a part time basis, such as data entry and manipulation, mailings, structured telephone research; or, where the volunteer has specialized knowledge, proposal writing and accessibility surveys. Both disabled and non-disabled Alaskans will be recruited.

Since there is at present no funding for expansion of this project into additional program areas, the task of seeking seed money for this expansion in FY89, starting July 1, 1988, falls to the existing Challenge Alaska staff, board and volunteers.

FY89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Research funding
2. Submit written proposals
3. Obtain funds
4. Prepare comprehensive work plan for balance of year
5. Obtain review and comment of work plan by Division of Tourism, convention & visitors bureau(s) and private operators (may be through travel advisory committee)

PROGRAM #2:
TRAVEL PRODUCT INFORMATION SYSTEM

DESCRIPTION:

Information about accessible Alaska travel products is scattered, although many individuals and agencies want to help. This program, which is at the core of the project, would include:

- 1) Collection of existing accessibility information.
- 2) Developing accessibility reporting systems, including accessibility criteria and symbols for use in publications, which are widely accepted by:
 - * Physically challenged travelers and agencies which serve people with disabilities.
 - * The travel trade.
- 3) Creating a continuing flow of information about accessibility of travel products with updates as they occur. This probably will involve a combination of:
 - * Site inspections by Challenge Alaska and other handicap agency staff and their trained volunteers.
 - * Self-reporting by operators of travel products and their volunteers and staff, for example: parks, tour and charter companies, lodging facilities.
- 4) Development and maintenance of a computer data base suitable for storing and continuously updating this body of information. The data base software must be chosen, and the format designed with great care to meet the needs of:
 - * Staff and volunteers needing to enter data, and search for travel products, efficiently.
 - * Potential visitors and travel agents seeking information by different criteria including type of activity, geographic area, season, types of handicaps which can/cannot be accommodated, price, accessibility of transportation needed to reach vendor, etc.
- 5) Publicity to inform potential visitors and the travel trade of the service. This is also addressed under #3, promotion, and #4, publications.

FY89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Survey similar existing programs
2. Survey Alaska travel information systems
3. Create advisory committee
4. Conduct needs analysis
5. Select area of geographic emphasis for FY89
6. Develop preliminary program design and obtain feedback; obtain computer proposals
7. Program approval, computer purchase
8. Travel product data collection and input
9. Listings printed & distributed. May be in form of visitor guide (See Publications, #4)

PROGRAM #3:
VISITOR PROMOTION/RESEARCH

DESCRIPTION:

Successful promotion of any product in a competitive market is usually based on well designed and executed research. We then develop marketing strategies to make our product more appealing than its competitors. So it is with travel destinations.

In marketing Alaska as a destination to physically challenged travelers, two types of research are likely to be useful:

- 1) Travel trade research. The type used by the Alaska Division of Tourism and Anchorage Convention and Visitors Bureau involves self-reports by visitors:
 - * Interviewed on arrival, providing demographic information and stating what they plan to see and do, where, and for how long.
 - * Interviewed on departure: demographic information and stating what they saw and did, where, for how long.

The Division of Tourism also has been using Values and Lifestyles (VALS) research to target advertising to persons with the values and lifestyles with the greatest correlation to probability of taking an Alaska-style vacation (high cost, great distance, scenery, willing to accept less than luxurious amenities, etc.)

- 2) Disability-related travel research which is found to be applicable to this project.

The project staff should especially be alert for research indicating whether, given reasonable accessibility, challenged visitors will behave similarly to able-bodied persons with similar values and lifestyles.

Other research which would be valuable, if located, would be self-reporting by challenged visitors on satisfaction/dissatisfaction with travel products and destinations. This project will develop an instrument for exit interviews with challenged visitors and design a research program to utilize it. Execution ideally could be cooperative with the state program; because the state program uses random interviews at transportation terminals, missing highway travelers driving lift-equipped vehicles, it may be necessary to carry out the program independently using roadside interviews, direct mail questionnaires or long distance followup calls.

A marketing plan will be developed to promote Alaska as a destination for physically challenged visitors, considering:

1) Cooperative marketing with accessible vendors: mentioning the accessibility of Alaska, and of their product, within their general advertising program.

2) Cooperative marketing with the State Division of Tourism:

- * Citing the accessibility of Alaska travel products in its promotions, and inviting potential challenged visitors to write or call for more specific information on accessibility.
- * The State would present Alaska as an increasingly accessible destination in the travel planner text and include photos of challenged visitors here; would provide phone/address referral to the Travel Product Information System of Program #2 (TPIS); and would mark with a symbol each travel product in the Vacation Planner listings for which accessibility information is available in the TPIS.

3) Cooperative marketing with Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau and other destination promotion organizations:

- * In similar ways to those cited above for the Division of Tourism, utilizing the Anchorage Visitors Guide.
- * Distribute a prototype Challenged Visitors Guide through the ACVB including its Visitor Information Centers (see #4, publications).
- * Cooperate with other destinations as appropriate, placing highest priority on those with the greatest degree of accessibility first as to transportation, and then as accessibility of visitor attractions and amenities.

The first year will emphasize identification of challenged visitor markets and methods of reaching them. Promotion itself will be modest to test the information system. The promotional brochure printing should carry through FY90 if possible.

FY89 ACTIVITIES

1. Survey research relevant to challenged visitors
2. Develop and encourage inclusion in Alaska visitor research of data on challenged visitors
3. Explore cooperative marketing activities with vendors and destinations.

PROGRAM #4:
VISITORS GUIDE PUBLICATIONS

DESCRIPTION:

In #1, Travel Product Information System, and #2, Promotion, we described some ways in which challenged visitors could be encouraged to visit Alaska through existing visitor guides, and referred elsewhere for more detailed information. We will need to determine whether this satisfactorily meets the needs of challenged visitors. If not, specialized travel guides to Alaska for challenged visitors may be needed.

As mentioned in the research aspect of #3, exit interviews with challenged visitors will tell us whether information for travel planning is satisfactory, or whether better information systems are needed.

A challenged visitor's guide to Alaska would be a major project. It should not expect to be comprehensive in the first few years. Decisions will need to be made on priorities. Examples of differing emphases include:

- 1) Inventories of accessibility of existing travel products. If carried out by geography or type of product, this can be expected to list many products as relatively inaccessible. Although this might raise the consciousness of some vendors, it won't help a visitor plan his travel.
- 2) List only travel products which meet a set level of accessibility, and interest by the vendor in having challenged visitors as customers. This would reduce the volume of text and printing costs. While it might "challenge" some vendors to become sufficiently accessible for listing, it could create some ill will among those who are interested and making an effort with limited money.
- 3) Organize a publication primarily on the basis of Alaska travel itineraries using products which meet a certain standard of accessibility. If we use a driving tour format, and there are several accessible amenities (lodging, restaurants) or activities (cruises, trails) in a certain community, all these can be listed. Because so few visitors have traveled in Alaska before, sample itineraries are helpful. These should include updating existing walking/driving tours (see Anchorage Visitors Guide as most complete example) with permission, to provide accessibility information. To speed up the increase in accessibility of travel products, these itineraries should "reward" operators for their effort. New itineraries can be added in the next edition.

- 4) Many Alaska travel products are "summer only," usually meaning mid-may to mid-September. The major Alaska travel seasons are Spring-Summer and Fall-Winter. Although a travel guide can be broken up by seasons, it may be more helpful to publish semiannually. Coding by season in the travel product data base should simplify the production of seasonal travel guides.

FY89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Survey existing visitor guide publications and explore cooperative effort with Alaska publishers.
2. Select an existing visitors guide and develop a Companion Guide for Challenged Visitors.
3. Produce and distribute Companion Guide.

PROGRAM #5:
TRAVEL PLANNING SERVICES

DESCRIPTION:

Alaska is considered an "exotic" destination in the American travel trade. It holds the same kind of mystery for American travelers, and the same expectation of higher costs, as travel to Europe or the Orient. Travelers to exotic destinations frequently book completely packaged tours because they lack the information or the confidence to plan and book their own itineraries, or "wing it" on arriving at a point of entry. Unless their hometown travel agency has Alaska experience, its agents are hesitant to suggest an Alaska itinerary. This is why Alaska destination agencies and operators, such as the State Division of Tourism and major tour companies, may pay for familiarization ("fam") trips to Alaska for Outside travel agents. Many Alaska travel agencies plan itineraries for Lower 48 visitors (especially friends and relatives).

Dozens of handicap agencies and travel agencies, both in the Lower 48 states and abroad, state they provide specialized travel planning services for challenged individuals, but their knowledge of Alaskan travel products is not known. Many outside visitors (frequently friends or relatives of residents) ask Alaska travel agents to plan their Alaska travel because Outside agents just don't have the knowledge; but their knowledge of accessibility in Alaska, and willingness to offer travel planning for challenged visitors, is unknown at present.

To aid challenged travelers, this program will need to do the following:

- 1) Research the current activity and interest of Outside agencies in providing travel planning for challenged visitors to Alaska
- 2) Research the current activity and interest of Alaska travel agencies (some may be affiliated with, or operated by, larger travel companies) in such travel planning.
- 3) Determine whether a satisfactory level of service can be provided to challenged visitors using travel agents. If so, develop a program meeting the needs of potential visitors and the travel trade. This should include exploration of:
 - a) Use of Travel Product Information System (TPIS) described in Program #2.
 - b) Whether disability awareness training would be provided by Challenge Alaska.
 - c) How inquiries from potential visitors should be referred by Challenge Alaska to travel agents.
 - d) Whether Challenge Alaska should develop working relationships with a selected Alaska travel agency, or with multiple agencies.
 - e) In a referral program, what type of commission might be paid to Challenge Alaska for services.

- f) Or, what fees might be charged to travel agents for services listed above.
 - g) How to tie Alaska travel agency(ies) into networks with Outside travel agents in selected markets, either by working agreements or by selecting an Alaska travel agency owned by or affiliated with a national or regional travel agency; and providing "fam" trips for Outside agents if needed to improve their knowledge of Alaska travel products and obtain disability awareness training.
 - h) Inclusion of Alaskans experiencing disabilities in training to plan travel itineraries for challenged visitors.
- 4) If a satisfactory level of service cannot be provided using travel agents, develop a travel planning and booking capability within Challenge Alaska to:
- a) Provide challenged visitors with these services.
 - b) Generate commissions from bookings to provide program revenue.
 - c) Tie Challenge Alaska into the travel trade network outside Alaska to enable outside agents to book Alaska itineraries using information provided by Challenge Alaska; or by referring such inquiries to Challenge Alaska for booking (probably in return for splitting the resulting commissions).
 - d) If needed, arrange "fam" trips for Outside agents to familiarize them with Alaska travel products and provide handicap awareness training.
 - e) Train Alaskans experiencing disabilities in skills needed to carry out this program to the greatest extent possible.

FY89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Encourage referral of inquiries from challenged visitors to Challenge Alaska by the travel trade.
2. Respond to travel inquiries from challenged visitors by telephone and with materials and publications on accessible facilities and travel products.
3. Develop program to certify travel agents to plan challenged visitor itineraries at conceptual level, for implementation in FY90.
4. Develop, in cooperation with handicap agencies and the travel trade, a program plan for training Alaskans with disabilities in travel planning services.

PROGRAM #6:
DISABILITY AWARENESS EDUCATION

DESCRIPTION:

Front-line employees serving visitors currently receive training both in their specific job -- for example, hotel desk clerk -- and in hospitality to visitors in other respects. The Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau annually offers a training session in hospitality to visitors, emphasizing things to do and see.

This program will make available training for front line visitor related employees similar to that provided to Challenge Alaska's activity program volunteers. Subjects may include:

- 1) Major types of mobility limitations and the extent of the limitations on indoor and outdoor activities.
- 2) Causes of the limitations such as certain diseases, and other symptoms or limitations which should be known for the safety and comfort of participants.
- 3) Courtesy to challenged individuals including wheelchair etiquette, assisting the blind and communication with the hearing impaired.
- 4) Publications and local agencies to use as resources for future education and in emergencies.

Explore the best methods to provide this education, such as:

- 1) Offer to provide a training session for inclusion in existing training programs, such as those provided for staff of hotels, airlines or motorcoach tour companies.
- 2) Provide publications or audio-visual materials for use by others.
- 3) Develop and offer education programs at convenient locations and times annually for other front line visitor related personnel and interested individuals; for example, regional workshops and conventions.
- 4) Include individuals who experience disabilities as trainers.

FY89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Establish a volunteer corps (including both disabled and able bodied individuals) to work with staff in providing education activities.
2. Publicize workshops through trade show contacts, travel trade publications, speaking engagements, direct mail and other means.
3. Hold disability awareness workshops for front line visitor related employees in two regions.
4. Develop publication distribution program to educate the travel trade.

PROGRAM #7:
TRAVEL PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT

DESCRIPTION:

Increasing the number and variety of travel products accessible to challenged Alaska visitors can be accelerated by using several approaches. Those include:

- 1) Better promotion of Alaska travel products to potential challenged visitors (Programs #2 through #5), increasing the impact of the challenged visitor market on product operators.
- 2) Encouraging operators to make their travel products accessible, through site visits, direct mail, trade show contacts, travel trade speaking engagements and other appropriate means.
- 3) Providing technical assistance, on request, to operators on accessibility design and sources of funding or tax breaks for construction of accessibility improvements.
- 4) Participating in the planning of proposed projects to encourage design and construction for maximum accessibility (such as requesting fully accessible design of new facilities planned at an existing resort; or proposing that leases of state land for new ski resorts require accessibility of appropriate facilities and amenities).
- 5) Proposing new projects to:
 - a) Increase the accessibility of both public and private existing travel products (such as improving surface and reducing grade of a park path, or purchasing a motorcoach with hydraulic lift to service a mix of challenged and able bodied visitors on a proven tour route).
 - b) Create new, accessible travel products (such as creating a new, fully accessible park campground or tours designed to accomodate mobility limited individuals including elderly, using lift equipped motorcoaches designed to serve a clientele of mixed mobility levels).

FY89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Continue technical assistance on request to public agencies and private operators to improve accessibility, under contracts-for-service where appropriate.
2. Actively promote increased accessibility of travel products with emphasis on areas or products with highest use.
3. Develop publications program on design, construction and modification of facilities to improve accessibility, and distribute to travel trade, to include information on financial benefits including tax breaks.

PROGRAM #8:
OUTDOOR RECREATION ACTIVITIES

DESCRIPTION:

Challenge Alaska already administers, with staff and volunteers, several outdoor recreation activities for challenged individuals. There is a high level of cooperation with other agencies; these provide other training or services, referring individuals to Challenge Alaska for its outdoor recreation programs, the largest of which is Alpine skiing. Several other agencies in Anchorage and other parts of Alaska also administer outdoor recreation programs for challenged individuals.

One such agency in Fairbanks is Better Options for Living Today (B.O.L.T.), which provides Alpine skiing and fitness classes, and organizes the Midnight Sun Wheelchair Marathon. B.O.L.T., like Challenge Alaska, is a chapter of the National Handicapped Sports & Recreation Association (NHSRA), and works closely with Challenge Alaska in several program areas. Challenge Alaska also has organized and provides leadership for the Therapeutic Recreation Section of the Alaska Recreation & Parks Association.

In connection with this project Challenge Alaska will:

- 1) Inventory and maintain records of existing Alaska outdoor recreation programs for challenged individuals as part of program #2, including whether these programs will accept visitors as participants.
- 2) Encourage the development of additional programs of this type as part of Program #7.
- 3) Continue to provide such programs, cooperating with other handicap agencies to avoid conflict or duplication.
- 4) Set and collect reasonable fees for participation in its own programs, and encourage other handicap agencies to do the same.
- 5) Maintain a program of exit interview research to obtain feedback from participants in such programs as described in Program #3, and revise programs as appropriate. Conduct other research to obtain input from challenged individuals, handicap service professionals, the travel trade and others as appropriate to determine outdoor recreation program needs on a continuing basis.

FY 89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Contract with B.O.L.T. (\$25,000) to provide activities in Fairbanks, and provide technical expertise to B.O.L.T. in program development.

2. Provide leadership for the Therapeutic Recreation Section of the Alaska Recreation & Parks Association.

3. Provide a variety of recreation activities in Southcentral Alaska, including but not limited to adaptive skiing, dogsled trips, fitness classes, social events, leisure outings, moderately challenging and highly challenging outdoor trips.

4. Provide one or two demonstration activities in Southeast Alaska in cooperation with Southeast recreation providers.

5. Provide disability awareness training for recreation providers statewide to make existing recreation programs accessible to people with disabilities.

PROGRAM #9:
ONGOING RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

DESCRIPTION:

Mature nonprofit agencies use a variety of methods to obtain resources necessary to carry out their programs. "Fund raising" usually refers to special efforts to raise cash outside categorical operating grants or contracts, but this is only one possible resource. A variety of sources of cash, and other resources to carry out this project, should be explored and some are suggested here. As this project develops further, other sources will become apparent and should be pursued with vigor.

Cash Grants:

- 1) Division of Tourism, Alaska Dept. of Commerce and Economic Development, Juneau. Tourism Attraction Development (TAD) Matching Grants are "designed to help political subdivisions or nonprofit organizations develop or improve existing local touristic attractions." Visitor Information Center (VIC) Matching Grants are "designed to help political subdivisions or nonprofit organizations staff, construct or operate local visitor information centers."
- 2) Major tour companies such as Holland America Lines/Westours Inc. operating as Gray Line; Alaska Sightseeing Tours (operating in the Lower 48 as TravAlaska Tours); Princess Tours (operating in Alaska as Tour Alaska and Royal Hyway Tours.
- 3) Cruise lines such as Cunard, Princess, Sitmar.
- 4) Air lines: providing service from the Lower 48 and air service for package tours within Alaska.
- 5) Other Alaska and Outside corporations with corporate giving objectives related to economic development, assistance to the handicapped or outdoor recreation, to be determined by research.
- 6) Foundations with similar objectives.
- 7) Other government agencies with categorical grant programs which may be appropriate.

Donated or In Kind Goods Or Services

- 1) Computer manufacturers and retailers: Computers, peripherals and software needed for the Travel Product Information System.
- 2) Tour companies: Staff participation in education or training programs. Fam trips to familiarize program staff with products.
- 3) Public lands agencies: On-site accessibility surveys (once trained); staff participation in planning and construction of accessible products and accessibility improvements.
- 4) Division of Tourism, Convention & Visitors Bureaus: Space in visitors guides, distribution of publications for challenged visitors.

Fees, Sales, Commissions

- 1) Participation fees--outdoor recreation programs.

- 2) Sale of challenged visitor travel guide(s) to Alaska, if developed.
- 3) Commissions for referral of inquiries to contract travel agency; or commissions from vendors if Challenge Alaska acts as the agent.
- 4) Sale of Challenge Alaska merchandise to visitors -- T shirts, headbands. Consider creation of products specifically aimed at the challenged visitor market.
- 5) Disability awareness workshop and training fees.
- 6) Consulting contracts for technical assistance to developers in maximizing accessibility of proposed facilities.
7. Membership fees for interested travel related individuals or organizations. As with convention & visitor bureaus, benefits of membership could include professional newsletters or use of research related to physically challenged visitors

Volunteers

Volunteers can assist in research, accessibility surveys (when trained), data entry and manipulation, and responding to phone inquiries. Creation of a working Travel Advisory Committee should be seriously considered and this may be the best place for volunteers from the travel trade. Sources of volunteers:

- 1) Existing Challenge Alaska volunteer corps (over 100). Some may have expertise related to this project, or it may interest them more than other projects.
- 2) Existing Challenge Alaska participant Corps (over 150).
- 2) List project volunteer needs with Volunteers of America/Retired Senior Volunteer program.
- 3) List volunteer needs with Volunteer Opportunities (United Way volunteer referral office).
- 4) Solicit volunteers with radio and cable network PSAs.
- 5) Invite volunteers from the travel trade, taking care to avoid any conflict of interest (such as referrals to the company which employs them).

FY 89 ACTIVITIES:

1. Apply to Division of Tourism for matching grants to support visitors guide publications or other grant eligible activities.
2. Begin solicitation of funding from visitor industry for cooperative marketing, training and publications.
3. Continue development of volunteer services.
4. Encourage travel agency participation in the state supported work program for Alaskans who experience disabilities.
4. Enter contract agreements with developers to assist in planning of travel products and accessible facilities for challenged visitors.



March 23, 1988

Senator Rick Uehling
Pouch V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Uehling:

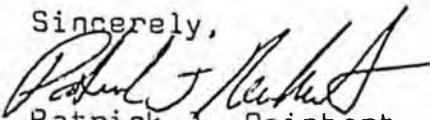
Attached you will find a letter of support for Senate Resolution #62, "Relating to making state facilities and national parks in Alaska accessible to visitors." Also attached is a detailed budget of how Challenge Alaska would spend a \$35,000 grant for the promotion of tourism for the physically challenged. This grant would be made available through the Division of Tourism. I recently had discussions with Mr. Hugh Gellert, Director of the Division, and he is very supportive of our initiative.

Originally, we had combined this request with an existing contract with State Parks. Presently, we are in the Governor's budget under Parks at the \$35,000 level. These funds help support Challenge Alaska recreation activities for disabled Alaskans. We have asked for an additional increment of \$25,000 from Parks to support recreation activities in the Fairbanks area. Your support of this request is appreciated by all those disabled Alaskans who benefit from our program.

As you will notice, the funding we requested for visitor promotion is only 75% of the project budget. Challenge Alaska is committed to the project, and we will demonstrate this commitment by raising the additional funds thorough service contracts, workshop fees, and donations from private industry. We have also been very successful in raising funds for the activities we provide to disabled Alaskans. You should know that the grant provided by State Parks is less than 25% of our total activity budget.

We have a unique opportunity in Alaska to develop a truly accessible visitor industry. I believe you recognize this fact. I want to thank you for your support of Challenge Alaska and being sensitive to the needs of the physically challenged visitor.

Sincerely,


Patrick J. Reinhart
Executive Director

Attachments: Physically Challenged Visitor Promotion Budget
Letter of Support for SJR #62

P.O. BOX 110065 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99511: (907) 563-2658
ADAPTIVE SKI SCHOOL: (907) 783-2925



GOALS AND OBJECTIVES OF PROJECT

GOALS:

1. Facilitate travel and outdoor recreation in Alaska by all physically challenged visitors.
2. Bring economic benefits to Alaskans (both disabled and non-disabled) through development of this new visitor market.
3. Generate sufficient resources, through service contracts, grants, fees, commissions, memberships, donated funds, goods or services, volunteer work and other means, to maintain a continuing program.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Obtain funding for startup phase of project; as part of startup, revise project plan for FY89 in line with funding level.
2. Continue to provide outdoor recreation activities. Develop demonstration activities to test their marketability and to stimulate the interest of private vendors in replacing Challenge Alaska as the operator of these activities wherever possible.
3. Develop and maintain research program on challenged visitor market, including elderly with limited mobility.
4. Promote Anchorage and Alaska as destinations for these visitors.
5. Facilitate travel planning for such visitors with materials, information services, reservation services and other appropriate means.
6. Create new job opportunities for Alaskans experiencing a disability in the travel trade.
7. Develop and maintain ongoing relationships within the travel trade so as to facilitate challenged visitor development.
8. Provide disability awareness or other needed training to front line visitor related employees.
9. Develop ongoing financial support through grants, contracts, memberships, donated funds, donated goods, donated services or other means.
10. Examine feasibility of charging fees or obtaining commissions for provision of training, materials, or travel consulting services to the travel trade.
11. Recruit and train volunteers to support this program as appropriate.
12. Provide information on tax breaks and other financial advantages of providing increased accessibility in private accommodations and visitor related facilities.

CHALLENGE ALASKA
 Visitor Promotion Program
 Budget - FY83

SALARIES	
1 FT Visitor Access Specialist	25,000
TAXES/FRINGE	
FICA	787
WORKMANS COMP	1,000
ESC	810
Medical	360
FACILITIES	
Telephone	300
SUPPLIES	
Office	1,000
Workshop Supplies	1,200
Postage	800
Software	1,000
EQUIPMENT	
Computer Harware	1,600
Workshop Equipment	600
TRAVEL	
Mileage (.25/mile at 4,000)	1,000
Vehicle Rent	300
Airfare (in-state)	
In-state	800
(Juneau, FBX, Kodiak Workshp	
Out-of-state	700
(National Park Service	
Access Workshop)	
Food/Lodging	440
CONTRACT SERVICES	
Consultants	2,000
Workshop Coordinators	2,400
OTHER	
Training	250
Promo/Advertising	500
Printing/Copying	1,500
Resource Materials	250
Miscellaneous	1,200

Total:	46,337



Challenge Alaska

March 28, 1988

The Alaska Legislature
Pouch V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear legislator:

Challenge Alaska supports Senate Joint Resolution NO. 62, "Relating to making state facilities and national parks in Alaska accessible to visitors."

Challenge Alaska, a nonprofit agency that provides recreation opportunities for Alaskans who experience a disability, has been promoting more accessible public recreation facilities for several years. In fact, Challenge Alaska staff and volunteers, both disabled and able-bodied, have conducted numerous detailed access studies of State Parks, National Parks, and National Forest Service facilities, recreation areas, and trails. We have found both good and bad news.

The bad news first: Many areas are inaccessible to individuals with limited mobility and there is plenty of improvements that need to be made.

The good news, however, is that land and park managers from federal and state government have been receptive and responsive to Challenge Alaska's recommendations over the years. The National Park Service, for instance, is making many accessibility improvements in Denali National Park and are the leader in the field when it comes to designing interpretive programs for all groups, including the hearing and visually impaired. The National Forest Service has built two completely accessible public use cabins; never mind that one has to fly in to use them.

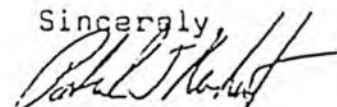
Alaska State Parks has been very cooperative, and now includes information on accessibility in the State Parks brochure. They have also built an accessible fishing bridge at Bradley-Keppler lakes, and improved many campgrounds for access. The Tourism bill submitted by Representatives Kay Brown and Johnny Ellis, includes many projects for improved access within the State Parks system. More and more State Parks is requiring concessionaires to be accessible too. In addition, Challenge Alaska and Alaska State Parks plans on cooperating on at least one major trail project that will allow the wheelchair user an opportunity to explore portions of Chugach State Park.



P.O. BOX 110065 ANCHORAGE, ALASKA 99511: (907) 563-2658

It is with optimism then that we look forward to the future. The national and state park system in this state is still fairly young, with many new facilities yet to be developed. This gives us a special opportunity to ensure that all new development be built with accessibility in mind. Likewise, the private visitor industry will soon realize the full economic potential of being able to provide accessible travel products to the 36 million Americans and other world citizens that experience a disability. Together, government and private industry can build a model visitor industry: accessible to all who want to explore Alaska's many wonders.

Sincerely,



Patrick J. Reinhart
Executive Director