

Opinion: Tourism task force is great way to give constructive feedback

Share your thoughts.

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Travel Juneau, the Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Association and Juneau Economic Development Council commend the mayor's Visitor Industry Task Force to hear community concerns about, and examine the future of, Juneau's visitor industry.

The benefits of this industry are numerous. Many businesses remain open and employ staff all year because of the revenue generated during the summer, and the vast majority of industry businesses are small and operated by Juneau families. Their sales and property taxes, combined with visitor industry associated sales tax, help support many community needs — including our schools, libraries, pools, parks and trails. Additionally, these businesses contribute to school athletic and other extra-curricular activities, our theater and arts community.

Certainly, Tourism Best Management Practices — a homegrown, award-winning program — alongside the City and Borough of Juneau, has been effective in dealing with impacts, so effective that it is being considered in other Alaska and international destinations. However, given the increased resident concern around tourism, the time has come to have a focused discussion about managing growth. The mayor's task force provides this opportunity, and we support its work. Like our neighbors, we are dedicated to protecting the Juneau brand of being a wild, beautiful place to live, play and raise a family, and a destination that provides a terrific visitor experience.

We encourage the public to provide feedback — positive and negative — through the Visitor Industry Task Force, and to have confidence in the group's ability to develop ideas and possible solutions in the best interest of the whole community.

• **Liz Perry is the president and CEO of Travel Juneau. This piece is also signed by Charlie Williams, the president of the Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce; Jill Ramiel, president of the Downtown Business Association; and Brian Holst, the executive director of the Juneau Economic Development Council. Columns, My Turns and Letters to the Editor represent the view of the author, not the view of the Juneau Empire.**

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