

For Consideration, to the Visitor Industry Task Force--

My name is Jayleen Bydlon. I was born and raised in Juneau and have been a local longer than I have been in the tourism industry. My first memory of watching whales was at 6 years old when I remember stating, "I smell herring?"; and a group of bubble net feeding whales surfaced, under my uncle's trolling boat. Like many kids in Juneau I spent my child on and around boats recreating in the local waters around Juneau.

Growing up here means I have seen the tourism industry change over the years. As tourism has changed and developed I have heard my friends and neighbors voice concerns along the way, one major and often repeated issue I heard was that the water based tours, specifically whale watching tours, were expanding so fast that they left locals fighting for water space. It was a sentiment I sympathized with.

After I finished college, I decided that I wanted to live in Juneau year-round and make my life in the community where I grew up. So, I started my small, personalized whale watching company in 2015 and I began adding to the very industry that I felt was growing so rapidly.

Once I started my business my point of view started to evolve. I learned that whale watching companies, like mine, adopt, often unnoticed, voluntary guidelines that strive to make a smaller impact on Juneau; residents and wildlife.

To list a few programs that most whale watching/sport fishing businesses donate their time and energy attending and pursuing:

- Tourism's Best Management Practices: voluntary rules, regulations/hotline responses and meetings
- Juneau Charter Boat Association: a group of small business owners who live in Juneau year-round, who make efforts
- Pre-season meeting of ALL captains—organized by either Juneau Charter Boat Association OR a private company—in the interest of putting everyone on the same page
- Pre-derby meeting: to minimize our affects as an industry on local fishermen
- Attendance of Assembly meetings discussing use of harbors and van/bus pickup and drop offs in downtown Juneau

These are all programs to which my business donates time. Businesses like mine also shop local, donate to local charities, pay local sales tax and employ individuals from in town. We contribute to Juneau's economy year-round. The contributions made by small business contributions really

add up. With state jobs leaving Juneau at a faster pace than ever before, we as a community cannot afford to squander the economic support small businesses give Juneau.

Tourism has allowed me to make a modest living through the business I've have worked so hard build. Tourism is an economic opportunity that Juneau should embrace and encourage, it's the reason I and many young people like me choose to live here.

Sincerely,

Jayleen Bydlon
Owner/Operator
Jayleen's Alaska