

January 30, 2020

Dear CBJ Staff and Tourism Task Force,

After the January 11th public hearing I was wondering, what is the variable that is creating the friction between those who have tourism businesses and those who live here and do not? No one spoke out in complete opposition to do away with tourism.

Up until about 1998 tourism was not an issue – not impacting everyday lives. As the industry expanded exponentially, the number of tourism related businesses grew resulting in an increase of public outcry.

It occurred to me that like commercial fisheries, industrial tourism uses our natural resources. Tourism businesses, excluding shops downtown, use our public lands, waterways, airways, trails, parks and roads for profit. Tourism businesses grow to accommodate an increase in cruise ship visitors. This results in crowded and congested public lands, waterways, airways, trails, parks and roads. The quality of life is now compromised for residents, not in the tourism business.

As tourism grew larger in Juneau we saw a significant increase in fishing charters and lodges. When chatting one summer with a pilot, who flew visitors to and from fishing lodges, he expressed grave concern about the number of fish boxes he alone was loading and unloading daily to accompany the fishing lodge / charter clients home. Self-regulation in capitalism is focused largely on profit margins. Beginning in the 1960's it became necessary to have federal and state environmental regulations requiring industries to protect our air and water.

Commercial fisheries are highly regulated: limited permits, catch limits and regulated openings. Industrial Tourism is not exempt. Regulations must be developed to protect our public lands, waterways, airways, trails, parks and roads so they are available for long-term use and continue to be public assets equably accessible to a profitable business and the general public.

Thank you for your service.

Linda Bleggen
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