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To: Tourism Task Force

What the Alaska Ocean Center will mean to Juneau

The Alaska Ocean Center (AOC), prominently located on the Juneau waterfront next to the Coast Guard Station, has been in the making for 5 years. Preliminary design and cost estimates were advanced, but efforts to purchase the “subport” property from the Alaska Mental Health Trust ended in failure, and hopes for an ocean interpretive center on the Juneau waterfront began to wane.

In Nov 2019, Norwegian Cruise Line (NCL) was the successful bidder on the subport property. Soon after, NCL contacted the Alaska Ocean Center Board and suggested the possibility of locating the facility on the newly purchased property. The Board is now engaged in discussions with NCL, and is moving towards the goal of reinvigorating the project.

Alaska is the right place for a world-class marine center. With five times the coastline of the rest of the United States altogether, with a vibrant sea oriented Alaska Native culture, with marine life and natural fisheries, we are the true “ocean state”.

When completed, the Alaska Ocean Center will mean many things to the Juneau Community.

1. **SUSTAINABILITY:** First and foremost, the Alaska Ocean Center will become a focal point for the community to become more involved in helping sustain the rich marine environment. The AOC will foster citizen science, and will enrich our understanding of the earth’s oceans and climate through programs, exhibits, and experiences that provide inspiration, tools, and connections to strengthen marine conservation initiatives.
2. **EDUCATION:** The AOC will educate and inspire visitors and Alaskans about the diverse maritime operations in Alaska. It will highlight the Blue Economy, including fisheries, commercial shipping, and cruise visitation. Exhibits will highlight environmentally sound practices, and provide a catalyst for future innovations in sustainability.
3. **COMMUNITY VALUES:** The AOC will provide year-round opportunity initiatives, with a focus on marine ecology, the maritime economy, and native cultural values. The facility will become a community asset with cultural connections and local pride of

place.

4. **AN EXCITING WATERFRONT DESTINATION:** The AOC will become a premier experience along Juneau's waterfront for residents and visitors alike, providing shoreline habitat, park space, and an attractive year round waterfront venue.
5. **INNOVATIVE SUSTAINABLE DESIGN:** The AOC will be designed to the highest standard for energy conservation, sustainability, and renewable energy. Exhibits and systems will showcase emerging maritime renewable energy opportunities such as sea-water heat recovery.
6. **LONG TERM PROGRAM AND RESEARCH SUPPORT:** The AOC will maintain a business plan that is based on sustainable contributions to marine science research. The creation of a sizable endowment fund dedicated to a healthy and vibrant Blue Economy will be a priority.

The Alaska Ocean Center, a thirty million dollar project, will provide substantial benefits to the community and to the Juneau waterfront. The NCL dock will provide the ability for ships to tie up at the pier instead of anchoring in the harbor. This allows cruise ships to use shore power instead of running generators, thus reducing exhaust emissions. A ship at berth also eliminates the need to run shore launches to and from the cruise ship to the shore, reducing additional emissions and the risk of maritime accidents. Downtown traffic congestion can be mitigated with a thoughtful integral seawalk, a roadway circulator to the ocean center complex, and possible electric water taxi implementation routed to the new dock.

The Alaska Ocean Center will be a vibrant re-use of Juneau's last open waterfront. The center will embrace the entire Juneau community, our visitors, Alaska Native people, ocean researchers, the fishing fleet, ocean transporters, and anyone concerned about the health and vitality of our oceans.

The Assembly Visitor Industry Task Force is seeking written comments on tourism issues and concerns through the month of February. If you interested in commenting on the Alaska Ocean Center, the link is city.clerk@juneau.org. Address Visitor Industry Task Force.

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