



# Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce

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## Board Members

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*Palmer & Associates*

February 1, 2020

Ref: Mayor's Visitor Industry Task Force

Dear Task Force Members,

The Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce appreciates the difficult work before the task force. The visitor industry brings numerous economic and social benefits to Juneau, but we also recognize there are challenges that accompany the volume of visitors we host. Juneau has addressed many of those challenges in creative ways over the years and we will need to continue to manage the issues of greatest concern.

As an overarching statement, the Chamber strongly supports Juneau's visitor industry. The revenues collected by the CBJ via a variety of fees and through sales tax paid by visitors is a significant contributor to the city budget. Visitors shoulder 18-22% of sales taxes that support the services provided to the community. The industry provides hundreds of jobs for Juneau's young people – many of whom get their first work experience and begin building their work ethic. The industry also provides a rich entrepreneurial frontier that exists due to the volume of visitors we currently enjoy. Many of the businesses that locals enjoy would either not exist or operate seasonally. The supporting business sector is often overlooked when the economic benefits are weighed. Laundries, flower shops, auto and boat repair, gas stations, insurance companies, embroidery, outdoor gear suppliers, and more are supported by Juneau's tour operators and other visitor industry businesses.

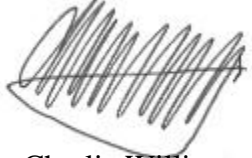
As it relates to the taskforce mandate to address management of the visitor industry and restriction of visitors, the Chamber offers the following comments:

- 1) Juneau's visitor industry has been managed in some form or another for decades. We will need to continue to mitigate passenger and vehicle congestion. With projected growth over the next several years, regardless of the addition or not of an NCL dock, larger ships and increased ships at anchor bring more passengers and vehicles on the roads and waterways. We need to develop a 20 year plan to accommodate growth and alleviate congestion in our downtown corridor.

- 2) Juneau has two existing levers that will slow or limit visitor volume – the existing number of docks and the natural limitations of the Juneau harbor area. Any slowing or curtailing of passenger volume and/or ships have a direct correlation to the revenues received by CBJ and the earning capacity of the private sector. The Chamber strongly suggests that any proposal that limits visitor volume be subject to an economic analysis. It is imperative that the community have transparency about the cost of these decisions. Any proposals that are designed to curtail ship arrival or passenger volume should be carefully vetted and made with full understanding of the cost to the community.

Thank for the opportunity participate in the community discussion. We look forward commenting further when there are specific proposals to consider.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charlie Williams', written over a horizontal line.

Charlie Williams, President  
Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce