



Haines Chamber of Commerce

“Working Together to Build Business & Community”

219 Main Street, Suite 14
PO Box 1449 · Haines, AK 99827
907-766-2202 · 907-766-2271 (Fax)

chamber@haineschamber.org · www.haineschamber.org

March 7, 2014

2014 Board of Directors

Barbara J. Mulford,
President
Takshanuk Mountain
Trail, Inc.

**Rodney Hinson, Vice
President**
Alaska Rod's

Patty Campbell,
Secretary
Haines Cable TV/ Radio
Shack Dealer

Scott Sunberg,
Director
Controller, Southeast
Roadbuilders

Kathi Lapp, Director
Chilkat Snowburners

William Kurz, Director
Haines Port
Development Council

Stan Mazenkis,
Director
The Butler Did It

Kyle Gray, Director
First National Bank
Alaska

Thomas Ely, Director
Sockeye Cycle

Tanya Carlson,
Ex-Officio Member
Tourism Director

Shori Heaton,
Haines Chamber of
Commerce Office
Manager

Dear Respected Assembly Members, Commerce Committee Members, and Mayor,

The Haines Chamber of Commerce writes this letter in support of the Interim Manager's recommendation to the Borough Assembly, with a pass through to the Commerce Committee, for a special ski competition event presented by our local heliski operators.

The mission of the Greater Haines Chamber of Commerce is to promote economic growth that contributes to the local quality of life by:

- * **Advocating the interests of its membership to the community and government organizations.**
- * **Facilitating cooperative programs that provide the resources necessary for business.**
- * **Educating its members and the community on the importance of a sustainable economy.**

The Interim Manager states in her letter dated February 26, 2014, "The applicants believe this contest will provide a marketing boost at a critical time, as the overall lack of snow in Alaska has been making the news and causing clients to look elsewhere. They also suggest that temporarily allowing access to currently closed, but previously open terrain may generate interest from skiers, photographers, and filmers who have visited Haines in the past." According to the request by the applicants, "Heli operations in other parts of the State, as well as heli operations in Canada, continue to grow and refine their marketing skills which are making the overall task of persuading customers to choose Haines more difficult."

The positive economic impacts of the heliski industry and winter tourism for Haines in general are substantial. According to page 93 of our adopted 2025 comprehensive plan, "In Chapter 4 the economic activity in Haines due to winter based tourism activity subject to sales tax is estimated at \$600,000." It also states, "Haines should continue to capitalize on its existing reputation and 'brand' as a recreation destination and "Adventure Capital of Alaska" by supporting a diversity of HCVB tourism marketing efforts, from cruise ships to Haines festivals to winter recreation." Our comprehensive plan also states that sales tax generated over a four year period between March and May showed that there was over \$110,000 in increased tax base. This was enough to offset much of the lost income from the decrease in summer tourism tax base in the years prior to 2005 (Comprehensive Plan chart 4-6).

We need to support our heliski industry. Their direct contributions to our community are by ways of sales tax revenue and bringing in visitors that patron our local restaurants, grocery and supply stores during our bleakest time of year for businesses. By removing some of the 2014 ski map lines you are supporting this industry and community as a whole.

We strongly encourage you to accept the Interim Manager's recommendation for this event and to pass a resolution temporarily opening ski areas. The impacts of this can only be positive for our economy and community as a whole.

Sincerely,
The Greater Haines Chamber of Commerce
Board of Directors