HAINES BOROUGH, ALASKA
P.O. BOX 1209
HAINES, AK 99827
VOICE (907) 766-6400 FAX (907) 766-2716

Dear Members of the Alcohol Board,

I am writing on behalf of Haines, Alaska, to formally request additional beer and wine licenses for our local eateries. The Haines Borough Assembly has unanimously passed two resolutions advocating for more licenses to help meet demand from our community and visitors alike.

This topic has received significant public input and support. It has been discussed twice before the assembly, presented at the Tourism Advisory Board meeting on August 1st, the Government Affairs and Services Committee on November 7th, and at a Haines Chamber of Commerce public forum on October 29th. This extensive input underscores the community's engagement and strong support for increased beer and wine licenses to meet the needs of both residents and visitors.

Haines holds a unique position in Southeast Alaska as one of the few communities directly connected to the road and ferry system. This link enables us to serve not only our local population but also residents from Alaska's interior, including service men and women who frequently transition in and out of the state. With this connectivity, Haines serves as a critical gateway to larger population centers and supplies, supporting both residents and visitors year-round. The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) further enhances this connectivity, providing critical, year-round ferry transportation that sustains our economy, population stability, and local businesses.

The recent AMHS Annual Traffic Volume Report for 2023 highlights Haines' dependence on ferry access: in 2022, we saw a 69.5% increase in embarking passengers, followed by an additional 32.3% increase in 2023. Embarking vehicle traffic also rose sharply, increasing 60.2% in 2022 and another 19.6% in 2023. These numbers underscore AMHS's essential role in ensuring a consistent flow of goods, services, and people that are vital to Haines' economic health and community stability.

The upward trend in AMHS traffic further illustrates why additional beer and wine licenses are essential for Haines. The 2023 AMHS report showed substantial increases in ferry passengers and vehicle traffic—demonstrating how AMHS traffic fuels our local economy and keeps our population connected. An increase in beer and wine licenses would allow our eateries to better serve this growing, year-round demographic, enhancing dining options for both residents and ferry travelers alike. For our local businesses, expanded license availability isn't just a benefit; it's a necessity to retain and serve the community that AMHS and our highway system make possible in Haines.

The surrounding communities of Juneau, Alaska, and Whitehorse, Yukon, further highlight the impact of ferry and highway traffic on our economy. With populations of approximately 32,000 and 36,000, respectively, these hubs frequently utilize Haines as a gateway for recreational access, services, and connections to larger population centers. This year-round demand places added pressure on our local

businesses to provide full-service dining options. For our eateries, which serve both residents and travelers, an increased availability of beer and wine licenses would better meet the needs of this steady, diverse demographic.

In summary, additional beer and wine licenses are essential for Haines to better serve its year-round population, support its local economy, and ensure the viability of our small businesses. The Haines Borough Assembly, our community, and the above data all stand in support of this request, and we urge you to consider these factors in strengthening Haines' economic foundation.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Rebecca Hylton
Haines Borough Tourism Director
rhylton@haines.ak.us
1.907.766.6419
Cell 1.907.314.3208