



Office of U.S. Senator Mark Begich

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Official website :: <http://begich.senate.gov>

Travel and Tourism

Fighting for Alaska's Travel and Tourism Industry



Alaska's tourism industry generates \$3.4 billion in economic impact to our state every year and employs more than 40,000 people. I understand firsthand the challenges Alaska's tourism industry faces everyday as my wife Deborah owns and operates four retail stores in Anchorage which are heavily dependent on visitors to our state. As your U.S. Senator, I have worked to champion travel and tourism by:

Promoting American Tourism Overseas

- Passed the Travel Promotion Act to create a national public-private partnership, to promote travel to all destinations in the U.S. Thanks to this bill, a new global marketing campaign - Brand USA - will launch this spring.
- Introduced the International Tourism Facilitation Act to accelerate non-immigrant visa processing.
- Championed bringing over 70 ambassadors and spouses to Alaska as part of an "Experience America" tour sponsored by the State Department. Foreign diplomats from countries such as Denmark, Uganda and Ireland, formed business and tourist relations with community leaders while touring our state.
- Supported the U.S. visitors' center in Shanghai to promote tourism to the U.S.

Championing Federal Support for Domestic Tourism

- Introduced the Travel Regional Investment Partnership Act (TRIP Act) to stimulate domestic tourism through local and regional partnerships and a grant program for state and regional tourism offices and local convention and visitors' bureaus to domestically market tourism destinations.
- Recommended the appointment of Alaskan Kirk Hoessle, president and CEO of Alaskan Wildland Adventures, to the U.S. Travel and Tourism Advisory Board.
- Co-founded the Senate Tourism Caucus which promotes common-sense policies that reduce barriers to travel and raise awareness of the importance of the job-creating travel and tourism industry.
- Hosted Commerce Secretary Gary Locke and Helen Marano, Director of the U.S. Office of Travel and Tourism Industries, to Alaska to meet with tourism officials and operators.

Building New Infrastructure to Support and Attract Visitors

- Passed the FAA Reauthorization Bill securing millions of dollars for improvement of Alaskan airports.
- Protected Essential Air Service for 44 Alaska communities from Congressional cuts.
- Secured more than \$25 million in funding to improve Alaskan harbors.
- Recovery Act awarded over \$120 million for improvements to Alaska airports and highways.
- Introduced the U.S. Ferry Systems Investment Act which provides \$200 million annually for the strengthening of ferry systems across the country.
- Secured \$1.8 million in federal grants for construction of the Hatcher Pass Transit Facility.
- Recovery Act awarded \$22 million to enhance visitor facilities and rehabilitate campgrounds, trails and cultural sites at Denali National Park, Gates of the Arctic National Park, Glacier Bay National Park, Katmai National Park and Wrangell-St. Elias National Park.

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Reducing Taxes and Regulations to Help Small Businesses in the Tourism Industry

- Supported repeal of the 1099 Provision, a burdensome recordkeeping requirement for small businesses.
- Introduced the Wyden-Coats-Begich Tax Reform Act, which simplifies the tax code and boosts our economy by reducing taxes on middle class families and small businesses.
- Passed the Thune-Begich Red Flags Bill, which clarifies a regulation by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) that otherwise would have required small businesses to undertake costly and unnecessary measures to prevent identity theft.