



# Municipality of Skagway

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MEMO

TO: Mayor & Assembly  
FROM: Assemblymember Potter  
DATE: February 14, 2024  
RE: Report from CLIA Pacific Northwest Conference

**I'd like to provide the Mayor, my fellow assembly members and the public with an official written report of my recent attendance at the first ever Cruise Line International Association's Pacific Northwest Symposium January 30th through February 1st.**

The event was a gathering of Pacific Northwest cruise industry partners tailored to the specific needs and issues of the Alaska cruise market. The venue provided a geographically convenient opportunity to meet and network with the various major cruise line partners. Manager Ryan, Port Director Jennings and I met with Norwegian Cruise Line executive Sandy Weir. I was able to ask her about guest feedback from last year's late October cruises to Skagway. She reported the guest experience was generally quite positive despite the cold temperatures and reduced number of opened businesses in town. Additionally, we, along with our geotech representatives from Shannon & Wilson, met with officials from White Pass, the Holland America Group and their corresponding geotech teams to engage in a cooperative discussion about current and future approaches to both rock slide areas.

Thursday marked a full day of speaker presentations. There were two highlights for me; a session on cultural tourism that generated some great questions from the audience and the keynote speech given by John Sage, founder and CEO of Sage Inclusion. Mr. Sage, who himself uses a wheelchair, considers accessible travel, "The last untapped travel demographic." He notably explained that there is a significant difference between being compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and actual accessibility that allows disabled people to experience comfort and greater ease in their travels. Throughout the event there was a common theme and emphasis on sustainability as well as manageable tourism.

I was able to personally thank Robert Morgenstern and Bonnie Westlund of the Holland America group for their successful efforts working with the Skagway School district in getting 100 of our school children onboard last summer for a tour of a Holland America cruise ship. This event came as a direct result of the Skagway 4th and 5th grade classes coming to speak at an assembly meeting. We all agreed that it was not only a fun adventure for the kids, but also provided value in inspiring possible future careers in hospitality, engineering, and other maritime operations, (not necessarily in the cruise industry). The plan is to carry out this program again this coming season. (In fact, other cruise line executives approached me expressing their interest in engaging in community outreach which I appreciated.)

And finally, possibly the greatest value of traveling to the various conferences comes from watching our Manager, Port Director, and Tourism Director in action. I can report with confidence that they work tirelessly for the success of our community.