

Emily Deach

Subject: Response to the finance committee

From: Shane Rupprecht

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To: Emily Deach <e.deach@skagway.org>

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To the Finance Committee and members of the Assembly,

I would like to thank you all for your commitment to our community during this unprecedented and trying time. I would like to respond to the proposed changes that surfaced from the May 28th finance meeting.

First, I would like to speak to the suggestion that those who are employed would NOT be eligible. According to Marketwatch.com, 30% of those who received a federal stimulus check used the check to pay bills, 14% put it in an emergency fund, 10% on essentials, and 8% on dept. In addition, according to Northwestern University, in each of the three days following check receipt, individual spending increased by between \$50 and \$75 for food, household items, and bill payments (including rent). What this suggests to me is that people are prioritizing bills and other essentials with their stimulus checks, which is the obvious and correct allocation in my opinion. These statistics represent those who have lost their income due to COVID 19, hence the reason they needed to spend any help they received on essentials to catch up.

I believe those of us who have been fortunate to maintain our income would not use this stimulus to pay rent (possibly to an out of town landlord), car payments, or credit card bills (none of which is helping any business locally). I believe the people lucky enough to still work at least part-time would spend their stimulus checks at local businesses that don't necessarily offer necessities, the ones hurting the most right now.

Speaking personally, my wife and I have done what we can to eat out, buy morning coffee, and purchase some "toys" from locally owned and operated businesses since the pandemic began- more so than we ever would before. However, the amount we can put towards helping these businesses is limited;, especially considering my wife has lost her summer income due to COVID 19. A stimulus payment, as presented by Mr. Ryan, would add a slight "disposable" income to our normal income that would go to home improvements which both the supplies and labor could be sourced locally for, eating out more than once or twice a month, and of course more coffee.

By removing those who have maintained an income, you are eliminating a "disposable" income that could go to the "less essential items" therefore taking guaranteed business away from small local businesses, and you are alienating a large group of established and committed locals which I believe are vital to the preservation of our community.

Secondly, I would like to speak to the suggestion that children who are 14 and under would NOT be eligible. Children are considered dependents until they are the age of 19. A dependent by definition is "a person who relies on another, especially a family member, for financial support". I had mentioned previously that my wife has lost her summer income due to the pandemic. Traditionally, my income supports the bills and necessities while my wife's income supports our food and any other items we purchase. I am fairly certain that most, if

not all, the families in town would attest to the fact that \$1000 a month would not be sufficient to feed- in my case- two growing boys, let alone their parents here in Skagway, AK.

Not allowing applicants to claim their dependents means that many families - who have chosen to make Skagway their home, despite the hardships of limited groceries/housing - will have to reconsider staying here despite all the tremendous benefits the community of Skagway has to offer. Simply because they can no longer afford its basic costs. This is the exact opposite of what this stimulus is intended to do.

Again, I would like to thank you for your continued involvement in our community and I ask that you please consider the statements and opinions I mentioned above.

Shane Rupprecht