



25th ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
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Fact Sheet for : Senate Joint Resolution 12
Sponsor: Senator Gene Therriault

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Short Title: Cruise Ship Port Times: Jones Act

Summary:

- Asserts the Alaska Legislature's opposition to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's proposed new interpretation of the Passenger Vessel Services Act of June 19, 1886, which would require all foreign-flagged cruise ships to stop at least 48 hours in foreign ports and that the amount of time spent in foreign ports amount to more than 50 percent of the total time spent in U.S. ports of call.
- Requests an exemption from the rule if it is adopted.
- Explains that the new rule could reduce the number of cruise ship stops in Alaska and the length of time cruise ships would stay and it could reduce or eliminate visits to some Alaskan ports.
- Clarifies that this rule change would diminish the attractiveness of Alaska as a cruise ship destination.
- Highlights the rule change's potential impact on Alaska's economy; including dramatic reduction of shore side employment and business opportunities in Alaskan communities.

Benefits:

- Preventing this new interpretation by Homeland Security from becoming law will protect one of the state's leading industries so crucial to our economy. The tourism industry provides approximately 40,000 jobs and significant revenue to many Alaskan-owned and operated businesses.
- Puts the Alaska State Legislature formally on record as opposing an interpretation that, if adopted, would be detrimental to our state's economy by eliminating and reducing employment and businesses in Alaska.

Background:

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security recently released proposed interpretations to the Passenger Vessel Services Act of June 19, 1886. Under the new interpretation, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security would require foreign flagged vessels to spend at least 48 hours in foreign ports and that amount of time spent in foreign ports would have to be more than 50 percent of the total time spent at U.S. ports of call.

The cruise ship and tourism industries are integral components of Alaska's economy. In 2007 alone, about 1 million passengers visited the state by cruise ship, typically calling at three or four ports of call. Should the new interpretation become codified in regulation, the impact on our state's economy will be significant, and particularly devastating to some coastal communities in this state. SJR 12 outlines the potential adverse impacts of the proposed interpretation and asserts the state's objection to such a change.