

Clayton Hamilton
F/V Dial West

August 18, 2023

Hello fellow fishermen and harbor users,

I'm writing regarding the proposal for an irresponsible, 9% rate increase that is coming down the pipeline here in the Juneau harbors.

I say irresponsible because the cost of operating the harbors has *not* in fact undergone any recent or dramatic changes.

Of course, the cost of everything has gone up and seems to just keep going up, but that's why the harbor rates are already tied to the Consumer Price Index and are adjusted annually.

Claims that the fees haven't changed in 17 years ignore the changes made to the CPI adjustment formula, just last year.

If you review the Harbors' own information about "cost drivers" I believe you will clearly see, as I do, that it is not the local harbors that are driving this issue, it is the cruise ship docks, the liability of operating them, the unfunded security mandates incumbent to them and the fact that cruise ship fees haven't changed since 2005! We, the local harbor users, are subsidizing cruise ship infrastructure and that is plain backwards.

The fact that the board responded to a financial short fall during the pandemic, by hiring an expensive outside consultant to tell them their own business, should make you perk-up and want to pay attention.

Local harbor business continued through the covid years and will continue through thick and thin; unlike the cruise lines and their associated business which will just shut down and pack up shop when things get tough.

The harbors are a public utility. They are not a "for profit" enterprise.

The cruise ship docks on the other hand SHOULD provide a profit for our community.

We hear from the board time and time again how the Docks & Harbors (D&H) are separate, that is it seems, until the bills come due.

If Docks & Harbors are in fact separate, then it is inappropriate to propose an "across the board" rate increase because:

If Docks & Harbors are separate, then liability should be assessed separately.

If Docks & Harbors are separate, then the personnel costs of each should not be conflated.

If Docks & Harbors are separate, then the facilities of each and the costs of operation of each should be assessed separately.

I conclude by again encouraging you to look at the D&H's presentation, the product of that very expensive, outside consultation. You will see that the Harbor's enterprise fund is CURRENTLY OPERATING IN THE BLACK. Simply put we do not need to increase the cost of this public utility. An increase in the cost of the harbors will disproportionately affect local users, the smallest local businesses and the liveaboard community. We already have the most expensive harbor in the region. We should not raise the rates of this vital public utility without extremely good cause.

If you agree that we should not raise harbor rates, tell the harbormaster, the D&H board, and also the Juneau Assembly, "I do not support a rate increase for the harbors."

The 21-day public comment period about this rate increase is scheduled to open August 31st. While this is a busy time for many, it is important to speak up if you can.

If you have commented before, please do so again – your comments were not recorded in the board minutes and the D&H board is reporting that there is no opposition to this proposal. A public meeting is scheduled for Sept. 28th. Please come and share how you feel!

Thanks for taking the time to read this and to consider these important issues. I firmly believe that we all must participate for the public process to work.

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Docks & Harbors Website on 9% Rate Increase: <https://juneau.org/harbors/proposed-rate-increase>

Summary of Rate Setting Report: https://juneau.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Harbor-Rate-Study-Summary_Oct2022.pdf

Docks & Harbors Fee Increase Brochure: https://juneau.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/Fees-Trifold_final.pdf

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