

From: [Fishing Vessel Dial West](#)
To: [Harbor Board](#)
Cc: [Borough Assembly](#); [Christine Woll](#); [Gregory Smith](#); [Wade Bryson](#); editor@juneauempire.com; emily@alaskahousing-homelessness.org; [Karla Hart](#); [Kathy Hansen](#)
Subject: comments for harbor rate increase proposal
Date: Tuesday, September 12, 2023 8:51:46 AM

I am writing to comment on the proposal for an "across the board rate increase", effective 2024. The very premise of this flat increase in both dock's and harbor's fees is contrary to the fact and principle that these are two separate enterprise funds and should be managed separately.

Dealing with the harbor rate suggestion separately, as it ought to be, a rate raise is unnecessary and unwarranted.

Rates are already tied to the CPI and adjusted annually. Further, the harbor fund is CURRENTLY OPERATING IN THE BLACK so we do not need to raise the cost of this important public utility. The cost of utilities, any utility should not be subject to sudden changes. This negatively impacts local businesses and the residents who can least afford it.

I would add two further points about the harbor rate suggestion;

1. We already have the most expensive harbor in Southeast, moorage is the highest, discounts that are available in other communities are not offered here and services seem to be about 130% as expensive as everywhere else in the region. We are driving away small businesses and seasonal users.

2. The harbors are home to a large number of people. This is some of the most affordable housing in Juneau. Over a year ago, (ironically while the city was providing housing assistance) the harbor board proposed a totally spurious, 100% increase on the liveaboard fee. Based on subsequent conversation, I understand that as many as 1/4 of the year round slips are liveaboards. This makes the city one of the largest landlords in our community. While the assembly may be comfortable delegating this responsibility to the board, I think that we, as a community, need to be careful about impacting the housing security at the most affordable end of the market. I have also spoken to the Juneau Housing Coalition about this. Juneau is the only community that I know in Alaska that levies a "liveaboard fee" or tax as some might call it, on these, most -affordable-houses in our community. This seems particularly hypocritical in light of our total lack of interest in levying fees on the richest (for profit & non local) players in our community.

Regarding dock fees; I support large increases wholeheartedly. The fact that cruise ship fees have not changed since 2005(!) is embarrassing to say the least, it shows a complete failure (& one might add lack of interest) on the part of our harbor-board leadership, to protect locals and local resources. I think the fact that cruise ship fees have not changed in almost 20 years suggests an unhealthy, even suspicious, lack of action. I hope new membership and specifically, NEW BOARD LEADERSHIP IN THE NEAR FUTURE can help to alleviate this.... I hate to think that there might be conflicts of interest that more fully explain this negligence.

Finally, with regard to the harbor fund particularly but also docks management.

MAYBE WE SHOULD TRY SAVING MONEY INSTEAD OF RAISING RATES

I have never, not once, heard a single initiative to save money or cut costs. If the harbor fund is concerned about future solubility, maybe we should shrink our footprint. Why do we need to send harbor employees to maintain ramps that are in state parks (pt bridget and taku harbor) who we are trying to impress?

Making the juneau harbors cheaper and easier will stimulate more local business. We need to protect core services and local access and invest LESS in tourist (cruise ship) infrastructure.

A healthy local economy is a diverse local economy.

--

Clayton Hamilton

FV Dial West