

Sponsor Statement for HB 359

Supplemental Appropriations for Tourism Marketing

*An Act making a supplemental appropriation for tourism marketing efforts;
and providing for an effective date.*

Released: January 29, 2002
Contact: Representative Eldon Mulder's office at (907) 465-6619

House Bill 359 appropriates \$6,000,000, in emergency funding, to the Alaska Travel Industry Association for additional tourism marketing efforts. The focus of the new and expanded tourism advertising will be to mitigate the effects on the Alaska tourism from the September 11, 2002, terrorist attacks on the United States.

Reduced numbers of visitors to Alaska in the 2002 season will have a significant effect on Alaska's economy, specifically the likely reduction in employment and revenues. Tourism is a major part of our economy, employing thousands of Alaskans. The seasonal nature particularly assists our young people earn money toward their college educations. This is only a part of the benefit. Tourism also provides a substantial number of year-around jobs.

The terrorist attack in September has caused many Americans to believe that they will be at risk with any travel. This measure will provide funds necessary to advertise that Alaska is a safe, affordable and welcoming tourist destination.

HB 359 is an investment in an industry that contributes heavily to Alaska's economy. It will assist many small businesses that are being harmed by an action well beyond their control.