

# Wrangell Visitor Economy 2025



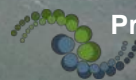
June 2025

Prepared for



CITY & BOROUGH OF

# Wrangell



Prepared by  
Rain Coast Data

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# Wrangell Visitor Economy Summary

Wrangell's 2024 tourism season brought in 3% fewer tourists than in 2023, despite original projections for a larger number of visitors. However, Wrangell's 2025 tourism season is expected to be its biggest in terms of visitor volume in twenty years as large cruise ships visit the community. Wrangell is expected to attract 40,000 to 45,000 tourists, depending on how full the cruise ships are.

**Total Tourist Arrival and Spending:** In 2024, visitors spent an estimated \$5.9 million in Wrangell. Based on current visitor projections, tourists are likely to spend \$7.6 million in Wrangell during the summer of 2025 (assuming 88% capacity for the cruise ships).

**\$5.9  
million**  
tourist spending  
in Wrangell in  
2024

## Overnight Visitors in Commercial

**Accommodations:** In 2024, an estimated 2,000 overnight guests stayed in Wrangell at hotels, inns, bed & breakfasts, and short-term rentals. These visitors spent \$1.38 million on lodging. Including other local expenditures, their total estimated spending in Wrangell reached \$2.4 million.

**2,000**  
Hotel, short-  
term rental and  
other overnight  
visitors in  
2024

**Cruise Projections:** Wrangell welcomed 21,207 cruise passengers in 2024. If ships run at full capacity in 2025, 41,968 cruise ship passengers would visit the community, a 74% capacity increase from 2024. In 2025, Wrangell is scheduled to receive 117 port calls from 20 ships. Cruise passengers are expected to make up 92% of the community's tourists in 2025. Based on the current schedule, in 2026 Wrangell is expected to have a record breaking tourism season with nearly 80,000 cruise visitors.

**74%**  
Projected  
increase in cruise  
ship passenger  
capacity in  
2025

**Positive Outlook:** The 2025 business climate survey of Wrangell's visitor industry indicates strong optimism, with 89% of respondents holding a positive economic outlook for the upcoming year, including 44% of Wrangell's business leaders that expect their prospects to be better or much better over the next year.

**89%**  
positive outlook  
for 2025 visitor  
season

# Overview of Tourism in Wrangell

In summer 2024, Wrangell welcomed just over 25,000 air, cruise, ferry and yacht visitors—about a 800 less than in 2023— and well short of the originally projected 35,000.

The shortfall resulted from losing 15 cruise visits. The cancellations were due to the bankruptcy of American Queen Voyages; three vessels opting to visit Klawock instead of Wrangell; and the Westerdam cancelling its 4th of July visit because of staffing concerns associated with the holiday.

As of June 2025, seven scheduled Wrangell visits have been canceled, with those ships choosing Klawock over Wrangell.

While Wrangell briefly experienced an influx of large cruise ships in the early 2000s, its tourism model over the past two decades has centered on ferry passengers, smaller cruise ships, and independent travelers. While that model had success, the market has changed. Deep reductions in Alaska Marine Highway System service resulted in an 92% decline in ferry-based independent tourism over the past decade. At the same time cruise numbers are increasing. Wrangell is scheduled to receive four port calls from large cruise ships in 2025, in addition to a strong number of visitors on small and mid-sized ships. In 2026, for the first time in more than two decades, Wrangell is expected break tourism visitation records as nearly 80,000 cruise ship passengers are scheduled to visit the community.

Wrangell is an attractive port, known for its authentic “working waterfront” atmosphere, offering visitors an experience distinct from ports with a stronger retail focus. Situated at the mouth of the Stikine River, the area is rich in wildlife and cultural heritage with historical significance, such as Chief Shakes Island, Petroglyph Beach State Historic Park—home to the largest concentration of rock engravings in Southeast—and the Stikine-LeConte Wilderness. Wrangell’s nature-based attractions are world-class. The Anan Wildlife Observatory is renowned for its bear viewing; however the area’s July–August peak access is limited, meaning that attraction has very little room for the large-scale growth needed. To fully benefit from shifting visitor patterns, Wrangell must adapt its tourism strategy.

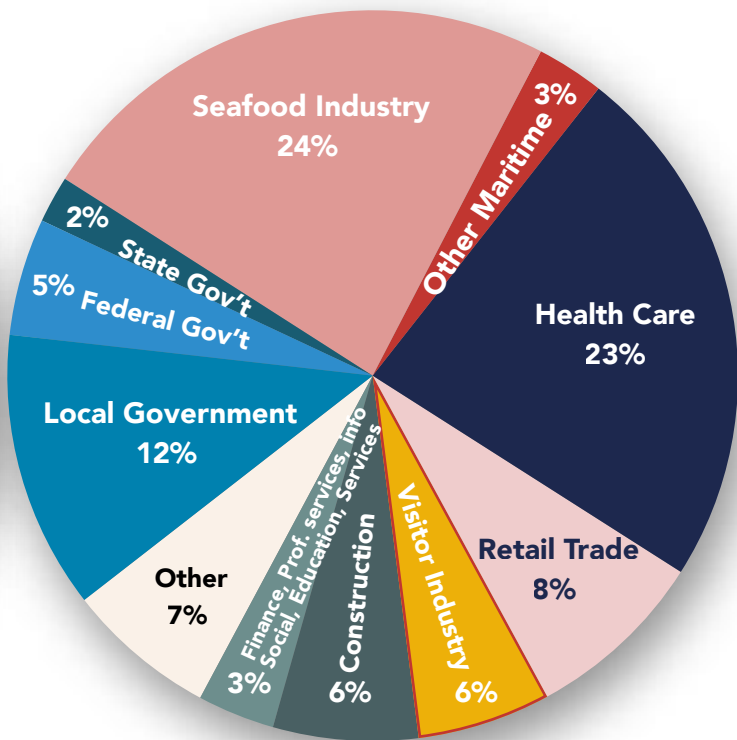
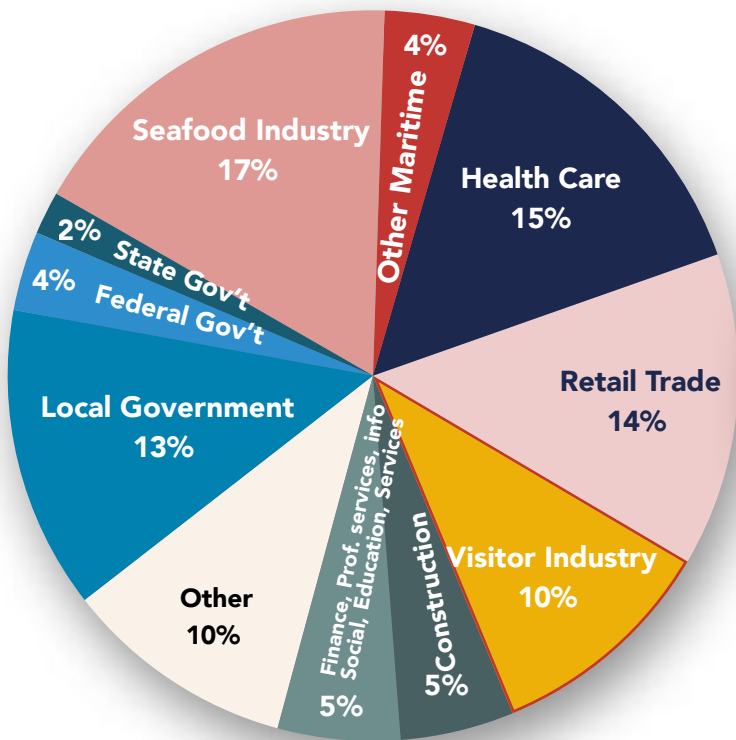
To fully be successful Wrangell must present itself as a competitive port, as other tourism-friendly destinations vie for the same customers. Developing more shore-excursions that appeal to higher-volume cruise markets presents both a challenge and a critical opportunity for Wrangell’s tourism future.

# Visitor Industry Employment

Wrangell had 1,052 year-round equivalent jobs and nearly \$60 million in workforce earnings in 2023. In 2023, visitor industry employment made up 10% of all private sector employment in Wrangell, accounting for 108 annual average jobs with associated workforce earnings of \$3.5 million.<sup>1</sup> The visitor industry accounted for 6% of total Wrangell workforce earnings in 2023. All four quarters of 2024 data is not yet available.

Annualized **Jobs**  
1,052 Total Jobs  
108 **Visitor** Sector Jobs

Employment **Earnings**  
Total Earnings \$59 million  
**Visitor** Sector \$3.5 million



Wrangell’s visitor sector is smaller than the region as a whole; the Southeast Alaska visitor industry represented 18% of all jobs and 13% of all employment earnings in 2023.

<sup>1</sup> **Sources:** Alaska Department of Labor Employment & Wage data; US Census Nonemployer (self-employment) Statistics. **Notes:** Due to data confidentiality, some figures are estimates by Rain Coast Data, based on all available inputs. Since annual average employment measures monthly jobs on an annual basis, a visitor industry job that lasts three months counts as one-quarter of an annual average job. Therefore total people employed by the visitor industry last year is a much higher number. 2024 data is not yet fully available.

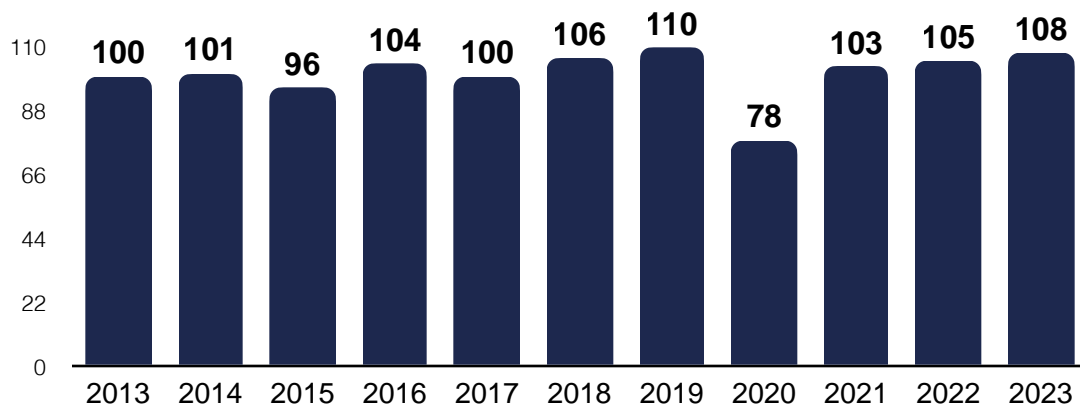
## Annual Visitor Industry Employment 2014-2023

Visitor sector employment in Wrangell has been remarkably steady (with the exception of pandemic year 2020) at just over 100 annualized jobs over the past decade. While peak worker count is significantly higher, using an annualized count (year-round equivalent job analysis) allows tourism jobs to be compared across sectors, and is a better way of making annual comparisons.

The average visitor sector wage increased by 4% between 2022 and 2023, while total workforce earnings in that sector increased by 3%.

|  | Year 2014 | Year 2017 | Year 2018 | Year 2019 | Year 2021 | Year 2022 | Year 2023 | % Change 2022-2023 |
|--|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------------------|
| Average Visitor Industry Wage                | \$22,227  | \$24,066  | \$27,259  | \$31,955  | \$30,961  | \$31,293  | \$32,520  | 4%                 |
| Total Visitor Industry Employment            | 101       | 100       | 106       | 110       | 103       | 105       | 108       | 3%                 |
| Total Visitor Workforce Earnings in millions | \$2.24    | \$2.40    | \$2.89    | \$3.52    | \$3.19    | \$3.29    | \$3.51    | 7%                 |

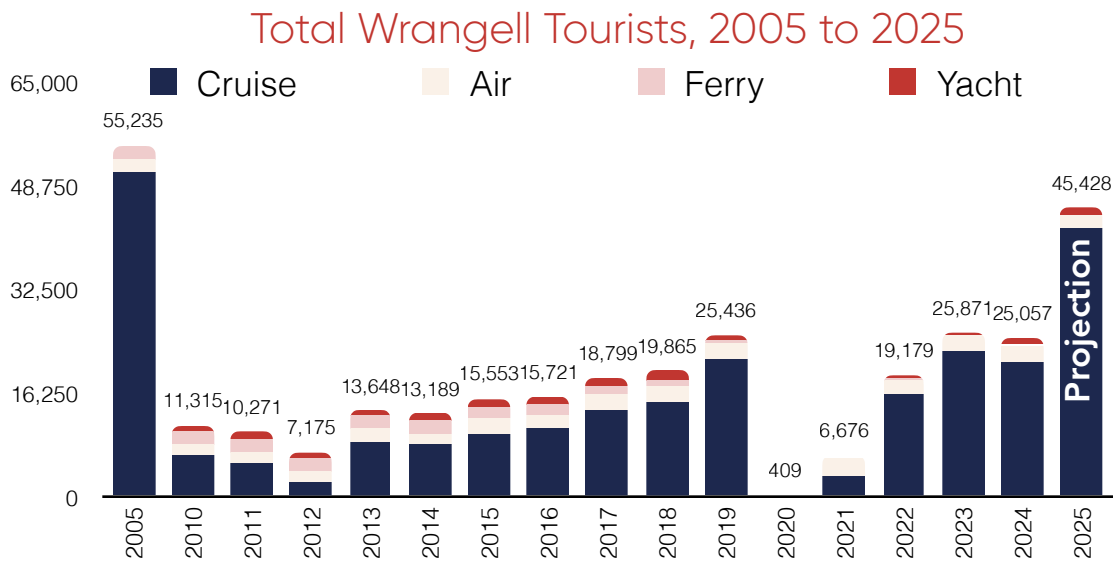
## Wrangell Visitor Sector Jobs, Annualized: 2013 to 2023



**Note:** Annualized employment (or year-round employment) tracks total workers each month of the year, sums the monthly total, and divides that number by twelve. **Source:** Alaska Department of Labor and US Census Nonemployer (self-employment).

# Change in the Visitor Industry

## Total Tourist Arrivals



In 2025, Wrangell is projected to host 45,428 tourists in the community, assuming ships are at full capacity, and 40,400 if they are at 88% capacity, as they were in 2024. Either way, it will be Wrangell's biggest tourism year since 2005. Wrangell receives tourists from cruise ships, airplanes, ferries, and yachts.

Wrangell has developed a boutique visitors sector, supporting just over 100 annualized jobs - a number that does not change much over time. The tourism industry in Wrangell has long focused on Anan. Because the number of people allowed to visit Anan each year is capped by Forest Service permits, and the season for Anan is quite limited, tourism growth in Wrangell has been partially capped as well.<sup>2</sup> The community had focused on ferry tourism—visitors who would spend multiple days and nights in the community, taking several high-end tours—but reduced and unattractive ferry schedules due to budget cuts have all but eliminated ferry tourism. Wrangell's current challenge is how to monetize growth once the boutique tours are fully booked.

<sup>2</sup> The Forest Services caps the permits due the bears' natural behavior and tolerance for human interaction while fishing. Before the permits were regulated by the Forest Service, Wrangell guides worked together to manage visitor/bear interactions safely.

## Estimated Summer Tourists to Wrangell 2010-2025

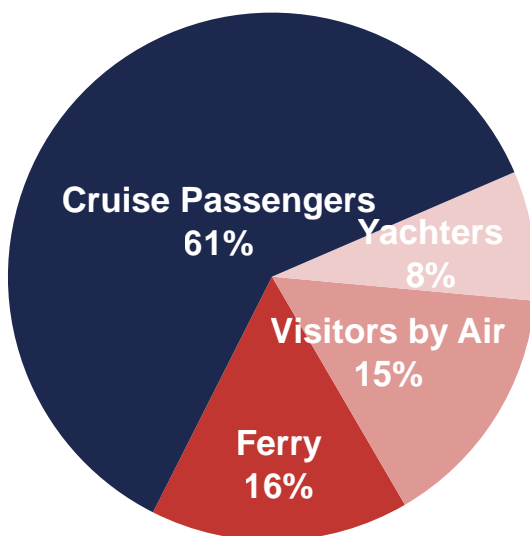
| Summer Visitors to Wrangell         | 2010          | 2014          | 2024          | 2025          | % Change 2024-2025 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| <b>Total Visitors</b>               | <b>11,907</b> | <b>13,256</b> | <b>25,057</b> | <b>45,428</b> | <b>73%</b>         |
| Cruise                              | 6,779         | 8,096         | 21,207        | 41,968        | 98%                |
| Air                                 | 1,768         | 2,008         | 2,600         | 2,300         | -12%               |
| Ferry                               | 2,000         | 2,100         | 170           | 160           | -6%                |
| Transient Vessels (includes yachts) | 960           | 1,052         | 1,080         | 1,000         | -7%                |

**Air:** US Bureau of Transportation Statistics RITA arriving passengers. **Cruise Passengers:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska. Small cruise ship schedules with research regarding total capacity. **Alaska Marine Highway System:** Annual Traffic Volume Reports and direct data request. **\*Yacht** counts provided by City and Borough of Wrangell. Due to a change in the counting process, these figures are no longer comparable to past years. "Summer tourists" are calculated in a variety of ways. All yacht and cruise passengers are considered "tourists." Air and ferry passengers are calculated by subtracting October to April average passenger arrivals from monthly summer passenger arrivals. From this number total seafood processing workers in Wrangell per summer is subtracted.

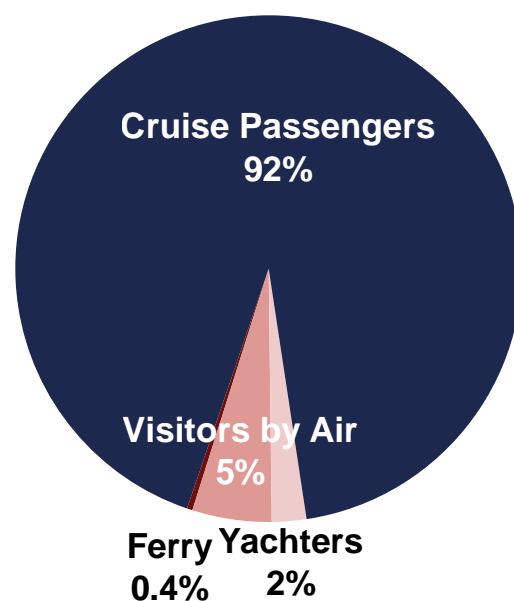
### Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival

In 2025, 92% of all tourists are expected to arrive via cruise ship, while 5% will arrive by air. Based on current ferry schedules, less than 1% of all tourists will arrive via ferry. In 2014, 61% of all tourists were from cruise ships, and 16% arrived by ferry.

Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival  
in Wrangell 2014



Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival  
in Wrangell 2025



# Summer Visitation and Spending Analysis

In 2024, summer tourists spent nearly \$6 million in the Wrangell economy. The visitor spending analysis was conducted using a full accounting of visitor spending through the City and Borough of Wrangell sales tax receipts for businesses serving visitors. Depending on the category, total sales tax receipts for winter months were subtracted from summer months to determine "visitor spending." Accommodation tax and short term rental sales figures were also used. Using this analysis, Wrangell's visitors spent \$5.9 million in 2024.

## Total Tourist Spending, 2024

| Summer Spending by Visitors by Category        | 2024               |
|--|--------------------|
| <b>Total estimated summer tourist spending</b> | <b>\$5,914,820</b> |
| Food, Beverages                                | \$1,969,159        |
| Excursions and Transportation                  | \$1,602,187        |
| Accommodation                                  | \$1,383,618        |
| Visitor Retail Spending                        | \$959,854          |

Note that Wrangell has a sales tax cap of \$3,000 that applies both to goods and services. Sales may have been missed by this analysis if they were over \$3,000; however only for the portion over \$3,000.

Using this analysis, and combining it with how many days each type of visitor stayed, depending on mode, and estimates of much spending per person occurred per spending category, estimates of spending by visitor type can be established.

## Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2024 Estimates

|                       | 2024          | Total Estimated Spending Per Passenger | Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2024 |
|-----------------------|---------------|--|--|
| <b>Total Tourists</b> | <b>26,307</b> | <b>\$238</b>                           | <b>\$5,914,820</b>                           |
| Cruise Passengers     | 21,207        | \$146                                  | \$3,098,947                                  |
| Visitors by Air       | 2,600         | \$954                                  | \$2,480,761                                  |
| Yacht and Ferry       | 1,250         | \$268                                  | \$335,116                                    |

If the assumptions from analysis are applied to 2025 projections, it is estimated that tourists will spend approximately \$7.6 million in the Wrangell economy this year, based on 88% capacity of cruise ships.

### Summer Tourists by Mode of Arrival and Expenditures in Wrangell 2025 Projections

|                                  | 2025          | Total Estimated Spending Per Visitor | Total Estimated Summer Visitor Spending 2025 |
|----------------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------------|--|
| <b>Total Tourist Projections</b> | <b>40,392</b> | <b>\$189</b>                         | <b>\$7,618,017</b>                           |
| Cruise Passengers                | 36,932        | \$146                                | \$5,396,818                                  |
| Visitors by Air                  | 2,300         | \$827                                | \$1,901,163                                  |
| Yacht and Ferry                  | 1,160         | \$276                                | \$320,036                                    |



# Cruise Passengers

Southeast Alaska cruise passenger arrivals hit a new regional record in 2024 of 1.73 million cruise passengers, surpassing the 2023 record by 4%. Wrangell's cruise numbers declined by 8% in 2024 to 21,207 passengers. The projection had been for a capacity of 31,437 cruise passengers. Several things occurred.

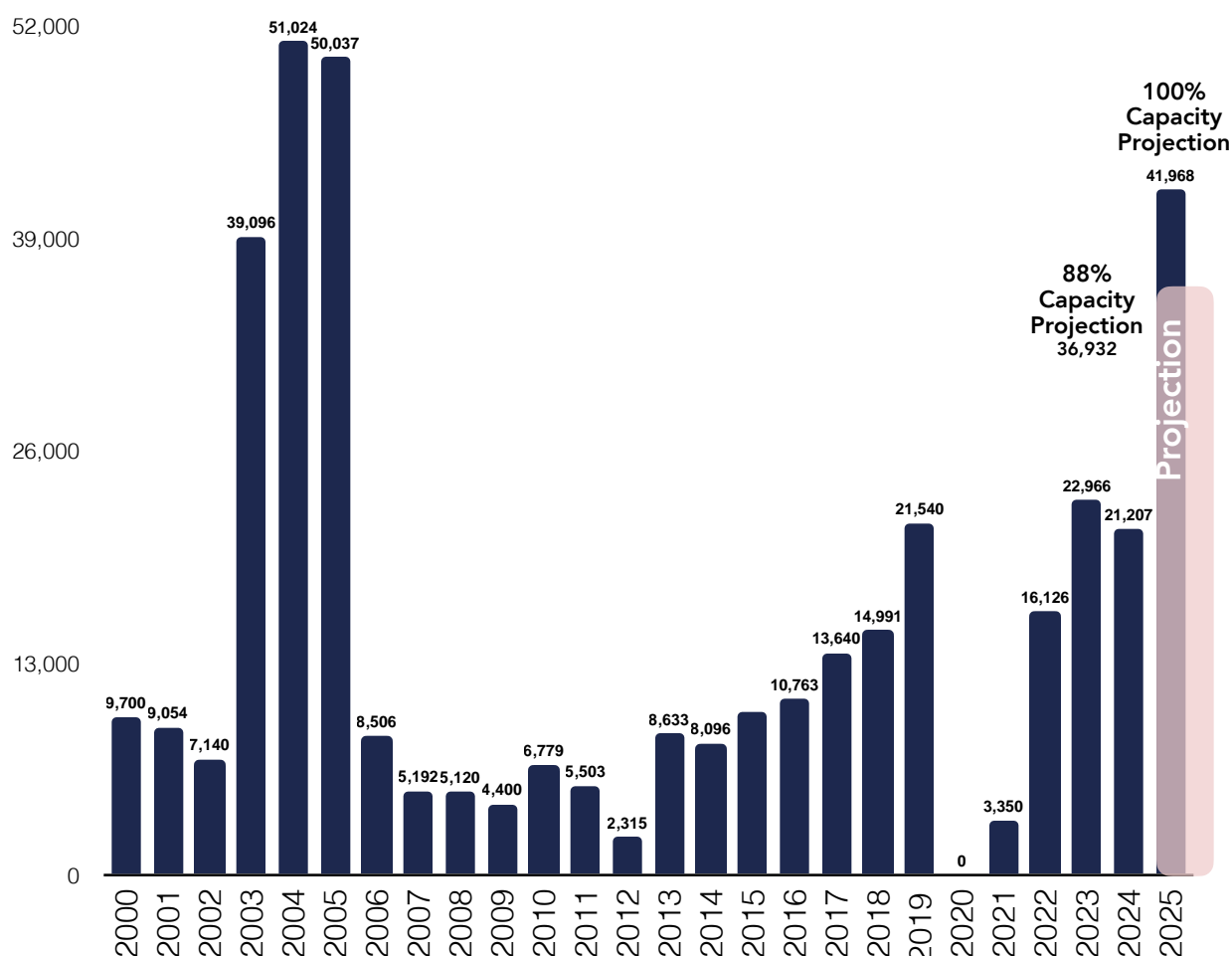
The ships visiting Wrangell in 2024 were 88% full. Wrangell lost 14 cruise visits from the 186-passenger Ocean Victory following the bankruptcy of American Queen Voyages. Wrangell lost another combined three visits from the 746-passenger Seven Seas Explorer and the 670-passenger Regatta, which chose to send the ships to Klawock instead.

## Cruise Ship Passengers 2024

| 2024 Ships             | Total Visitors | Passenger Capacity | % Capacity  |
|------------------------|----------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Alaskan Dream ships    | 1,420          | 1,420              | assume 100% |
| NG Sea Bird            | 550            | 620                | 89%         |
| NG Sea Lion            | 483            | 620                | 78%         |
| American Constellation | 2,502          | 2,720              | assume 92%  |
| <b>Small Ships</b>     | <b>4,955</b>   | <b>5,380</b>       | <b>92%</b>  |
| Crystal Serenity       | 574            | 740                | 78%         |
| Seabourn Odyssey       | 3,278          | 3,600              | 91%         |
| Silver Muse            | 2,115          | 2,384              | 89%         |
| Silver Shadow          | 299            | 392                | 76%         |
| Roald Amundsen         | 1,632          | 2,650              | 62%         |
| Regatta                | 654            | 684                | 96%         |
| Hanseatic Nature       | 400            | 460                | assume 87%  |
| Viking Orion           | 925            | 930                | 99%         |
| Fridtjof Nansen        | 374            | 530                | 71%         |
| <b>Mid-Sized Ships</b> | <b>10,251</b>  | <b>12,370</b>      | <b>83%</b>  |
| Queen Elizabeth        | 4,008          | 4,162              | 96%         |
| Nieuw Amsterdam        | 1,992          | 2,160              | 92%         |
| <b>Large Ships</b>     | <b>6,000</b>   | <b>6,322</b>       | <b>95%</b>  |
| <b>Grand Total</b>     | <b>21,207</b>  | <b>24,072</b>      | <b>88%</b>  |

**Source:** Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; McKinley Research Group, LLC; City and Borough of Wrangell. **Note:** Arriving passenger numbers were not available for Alaskan Dream, American Constellation, or Hanseatic Nature.

## Total Cruise Passengers in Wrangell 2000-2025



Source: Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell; McKinley Research.

While 2025 cruise passenger numbers are expected to represent a recent record for Wrangell, levels will still be far below 20 years ago when more than 50,000 passengers visited Wrangell. Also it will be about 5,000 short of earlier projections. From the Wrangell Sentinel in February 2025:

*“Wrangell’s potential summer cruise ship passenger count has dropped by about 5,000 with the loss of two mid-size ships to Klawock. The Prince of Wales Island community opened up a cruise ship port last summer to attract more visitors — and economic activity — to the town of about 700 residents which is on the island’s extensive road system that links 10 communities. The 728-berth Sea Nova canceled six Wrangell stops May through August, switching to Klawock, and the 750-berth Silver Seas Explorer moved an August visit to Klawock while retaining one Wrangell stop in May.”*

In 2025, Wrangell is expected to have 117 port calls from 41,969 passengers, if all ships are entirely full. This represents a 74% capacity increase over 2024. If ships are at 88% capacity, as they were in 2024, the community would host approximately 37,000 cruise passengers.

### Cruise Ship Projections 2025

| 2025 Ships             | Port Calls | Passenger Capacity | Total Visitors |
|------------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Alaskan Dream          | 15         | 40                 | 600            |
| Baranof Dream          | 15         | 49                 | 735            |
| NG Sea Bird            | 10         | 60                 | 600            |
| NG Sea Lion            | 8          | 60                 | 480            |
| American Constitution  | 15         | 170                | 2,550          |
| American Constellation | 16         | 170                | 2,720          |
| <b>Small Ships</b>     | <b>79</b>  |                    | <b>7,685</b>   |
| Hanseatic Inspiration  | 2          | 230                | 460            |
| Seabourn Quest         | 8          | 450                | 3,600          |
| Nansen                 | 1          | 530                | 530            |
| Roald Amundsen         | 7          | 530                | 3,710          |
| Silver Moon            | 1          | 623                | 623            |
| Villa Vie Odyssey      | 1          | 650                | 650            |
| Seven Seas Explorer    | 1          | 750                | 750            |
| Viking Venus           | 4          | 930                | 3,720          |
| Viking Orion           | 2          | 930                | 1,860          |
| Riviera                | 7          | 1,250              | 8,750          |
| <b>Mid-Sized Ships</b> | <b>34</b>  |                    | <b>24,653</b>  |
| Westerdam              | 1          | 1,848              | 1,848          |
| Nieuw Amsterdam        | 1          | 2,100              | 2,100          |
| Grand Princess         | 1          | 2,600              | 2,600          |
| Ruby Princess          | 1          | 3,082              | 3,082          |
| <b>Large-Ships</b>     | <b>4</b>   |                    | <b>9,630</b>   |
| <b>Grand Total</b>     | <b>117</b> |                    | <b>41,968</b>  |

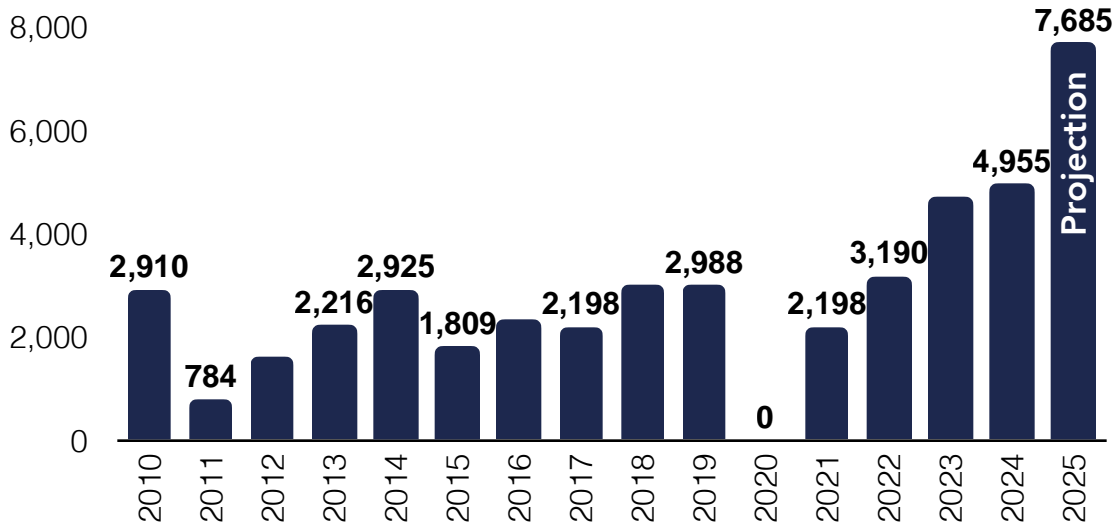
Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell.

For the purpose of this analysis, small cruise ships include those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel; mid-sized cruise ships includes those with 200 to 1,299 passengers per vessel; and large ships have 1,300 passengers or more.

### Small Cruise Ships

In 2025, 6 small cruise ships with an average capacity of about 90 passengers are expected to make 79 port calls, potentially bringing 7,685 passengers to Wrangell. This represents a 55% increase in the total number of visitors on small cruise ships compared to 2024.

#### Wrangell Small Cruise Capacity 2010 to 2025



**Note:** For consistency, 2021 capacity numbers are included for small cruise ships, although actual travelers were likely lower. For the purposes of this analysis, small cruise ships are defined as those with 30 to 199 passengers per vessel.

Wrangell's small cruise ship sector experienced disruptions in 2010 when Cruise West ceased operations at the end of the summer season, and again during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

### Mid-Sized Cruise Ships

In 2025, 10 mid-sized cruise ships with an average capacity of about 700 passengers are expected to make 34 port calls, potentially bringing 24,653 passengers to Wrangell if the ships are at full capacity.

### Large Cruise Ships

Four ships, Nieuw Amsterdam, Grand Princess, Ruby Princess, and Westerdam are scheduled to one port call each. At full capacity, they would bring a combined 9,630 visitors. This will represent only the third year since 2005 that large cruise ships have visited Wrangell. The Noordam made an unscheduled visit to Wrangell in September 2022, and 2024 was the first year with scheduled large cruise ships in two decades.

## Cruise Projections 2026

In 2026, based on the draft schedule, Wrangell is expected to have more than 150 port calls from nearly 80,000 passengers, if all ships are at 100% capacity - nearly doubling the number of expected ship passengers for 2025. The projection assumes a similar number of visits by small cruise ships. Based on the 2026 schedule, passengers from mid-sized ships are projected to nearly double, while passengers visiting by large cruise ship could be three times higher than in 2025. The 2026 schedule includes 47 visits from 8 ships not on Wrangell's 2025 schedule (indicated below in all capital letters).

### Cruise Ship Projections 2026

| 2025 Ships             | Port Calls | Passenger Capacity | Total Visitors |
|------------------------|------------|--------------------|----------------|
| <b>Small Ships</b>     | <b>79</b>  |                    | <b>7,685</b>   |
| Hanseatic Inspiration  | 2          | 230                | 460            |
| SEABOURN ENCORE        | 9          | 600                | 5,400          |
| Nansen                 | 1          | 530                | 530            |
| Roald Amundsen         | 1          | 530                | 530            |
| SILVER NOVA            | 1          | 728                | 728            |
| Viking Venus           | 5          | 930                | 4,650          |
| Viking Orion           | 6          | 930                | 5,580          |
| Riviera                | 10         | 1,250              | 12,500         |
| WORLD OF RESIDENSEA    | 3          | 1,046              | 3,138          |
| AZAMARA PURSUIT        | 3          | 700                | 2,100          |
| CRYSTAL SYMPHONY       | 4          | 600                | 2,400          |
| LUMINARA               | 6          | 450                | 2,700          |
| STAR SEEKER            | 13         | 224                | 2,912          |
| <b>Mid-Sized Ships</b> | <b>64</b>  |                    | <b>43,628</b>  |
| ZAANDAM                | 1          | 1,432              | 1,432          |
| Nieuw Amsterdam        | 1          | 2,100              | 2,100          |
| QUEEN ELIZABETH        | 8          | 2,081              | 16,648         |
| Ruby Princess          | 2          | 3,082              | 6,164          |
| <b>Large-Ships</b>     | <b>13</b>  |                    | <b>28,316</b>  |
| <b>Grand Total</b>     | <b>156</b> |                    | <b>79,629</b>  |

Cruise Line Agencies of Alaska; City and Borough of Wrangell.  
Ships that are capitalized were not the on the Wrangell schedule for 2025.

## Air Passengers

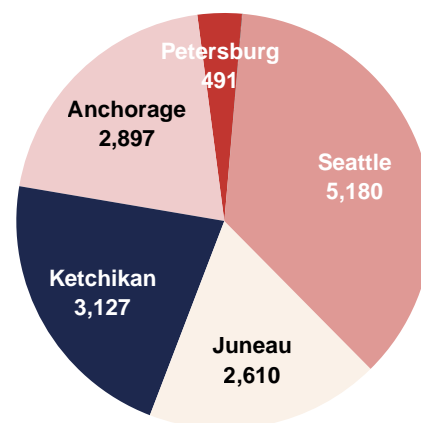
The number of air passengers arriving in Wrangell gradually increased through 2019. Passenger traffic fell steeply, and then rebounded strongly following the pandemic. Further growth occurred in 2023 as Trident Seafoods restarted local operations. In 2024, an estimated 14,297 air passengers arrived in Wrangell, a 2% increase over 2023 levels.



To estimate how many of these summer travelers were tourists (rather than locals traveling home or people traveling to work in Wrangell), average off-season monthly travel numbers were subtracted from high-season monthly travel numbers, along with summer labor estimates. Approximately 2,600 summer air travelers are estimated to have visited Wrangell for the purpose of recreation in 2024.

Looking at a full year of passenger data, the greatest percentage of passengers arrived in Wrangell via Seattle (36%), while 22% arrived from Ketchikan, 20% arrived from Anchorage, 18% arrived from Juneau, and 3% came from Petersburg.

**Passengers  
Disembarkments in  
Wrangell by City 2024**



## Ferry Passengers

In 2023, nearly 1,400 Alaska Marine Highway (AMHS) ferry passengers arrived in Wrangell. Just over half of these arrived during the summer (May through September).

Since 2014, the number of passengers disembarking in Wrangell has decreased by 80% — a nearly five-fold decrease — due to service cuts and reduced sailings. However, in 2024, the number of passengers disembarking increased by about 100 passenger over 2023 levels. Wrangell received 97 port calls in 2024, down from 354 port calls in 2014.



AMHS has been hit hard by state budget reductions, yet Wrangell has been disproportionately impacted by service and port call cuts. Visitor-focused businesses built around serving ferry passengers have been further impacted by the unreliability of ferry services.

The MV Kennicott was sent to a shipyard in November of 2024 and is scheduled to be out of service until the end of 2025, while the MV Matanuska has been out of service since 2022, leaving just the MV Columbia to provide weekly summer service to Wrangell.

## Ferry Passenger Arrivals

| Year                    | Total Arriving Ferry Passengers | Summer Tourist Passengers (Estimated) |
|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 2024                    | 1,397                           | 170                                   |
| 2023                    | 1,288                           | 225                                   |
| 2022                    | 1,513                           | 280                                   |
| 2021                    | 771                             | 143                                   |
| 2020                    | 274                             | NA                                    |
| 2019                    | 2,907                           | 815                                   |
| 2018                    | 3,749                           | 961                                   |
| 2017                    | 4,841                           | 1,364                                 |
| 2016                    | 5,399                           | 1,365                                 |
| 2013                    | 7,180                           | 2,010                                 |
| <b>Change 2013-2024</b> | <b>-81%</b>                     | <b>-92%</b>                           |

The 2025 Alaska Marine Highway System schedule has a similar level of service for Wrangell as in the past several years: one ship serving the mainline route, with one stop northbound and one southbound each week in the summer.

# Accommodations Visitation and Spending Analysis

## Total Accommodation Spending Impact Summary

In 2024, 2,000 overnight guests are estimated to have stayed in Wrangell, including hotel, motel, and short-term rental (AirBNB). These visitors booked more than 5,200 accommodation nights. Overnight visitors spent \$1.38 million on accommodation last year.

Those staying overnight in Wrangell spent an estimated additional \$1 million in 2024, on all other costs, including excursions, food, alcohol, coffee, tips, donations, retail purchases, etc.

Altogether overnight visitors in Wrangell are estimated to have spent \$2.4 million in 2024.

## Total Accommodation Spending Impact, Wrangell 2024

| Accommodation Type  | Estimated Guests | Estimated Nights Booked | Total Accommodation Costs | Estimated Spending (excluding hotel costs) | Total Estimated Spending |
|---|------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| Hotel, Motel, Traditional B&B (excludes short-term-rentals) | 1,549            | 2,846                   | \$1,056,463               | \$808,499                                  | \$1,864,962              |
| Short-Term Rentals  | 454              | 2,362                   | \$327,155                 | \$214,838                                  | \$541,993                |
| Total   | 2,003            | 5,208                   | \$1,383,618               | \$1,023,337                                | \$2,406,955              |

**Note:** All figures presented in this report are based on the best available data at the time of analysis. Estimates were developed using a combination of accommodation tax records, visitor counts, historical trends, industry benchmarks, survey data, and sources such as AirDNA and the Alaska Department of Labor. Where exact data was unavailable, carefully considered assumptions and proxy data from comparable communities were used to model visitation and spending patterns.

## Accommodation Inventory

In 2025, Wrangell had 26 overnight accommodation businesses, with 109 total rooms.<sup>3</sup> The Sourdough Lodge opened in 2023, after an extended closure, significantly increasing the accommodation capacity for the community.

### Wrangell Overnight Rentals Inventory by Rooms/Units

| Accommodation Name                | 2025       |
|-----------------------------------|------------|
| Stikine Inn                       | 34         |
| Sourdough Lodge                   | 16         |
| Wrangell Extended Stay            | 8          |
| A Suite Spot                      | 5          |
| Chrome Chasers, LLC               | 4          |
| Forget Me Not Lodging             | 3          |
| Grand View Bed & Breakfast        | 3          |
| Heritage Harbor Boathouse         | 3          |
| ARED LLC                          | 2          |
| Mt. Dewey Sunset Bed & View       | 2          |
| Reeves Guesthouse                 | 2          |
| NorthStar Reflections Guest Suite | 1          |
| Harbor Heights                    | 1          |
| Below Deck Apt, LLC               | 1          |
| Ritchie, Bonnie & Chad            | 1          |
| Maxmo Rentals                     | 1          |
| Huckleberry Hill Cottage          | 1          |
| Love Shack                        | 1          |
| Fort Wrangell                     | 2          |
| B&B One Block from Town           | 4          |
| Historic Tugboat                  | 2          |
| MV Adak                           | 2          |
| Reliance Harbor                   | 2          |
| Cozy Wrangell                     | 2          |
| Other short-term rentals          | 6          |
| <b>Total Rooms/Units</b>          | <b>109</b> |

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<sup>3</sup> Many of these rooms are available in summer only and a handful of the AirBNBs have very limited availability.

## Accommodation Tax

The City and Borough of Wrangell imposes a 6% transient occupancy tax on the rental of temporary lodging, including hotels, bed and breakfasts, and short-term rentals.

Based on tax collections, 12 short-term rental businesses with 20 combined rooms or units are also not currently paying local accommodation tax.

Still, the accommodation tax data is incredibly useful, because it represents a consistent group of taxpayers. For the past 9 years, excluding 2020, average Wrangell accommodation sales has been \$1.5 million.



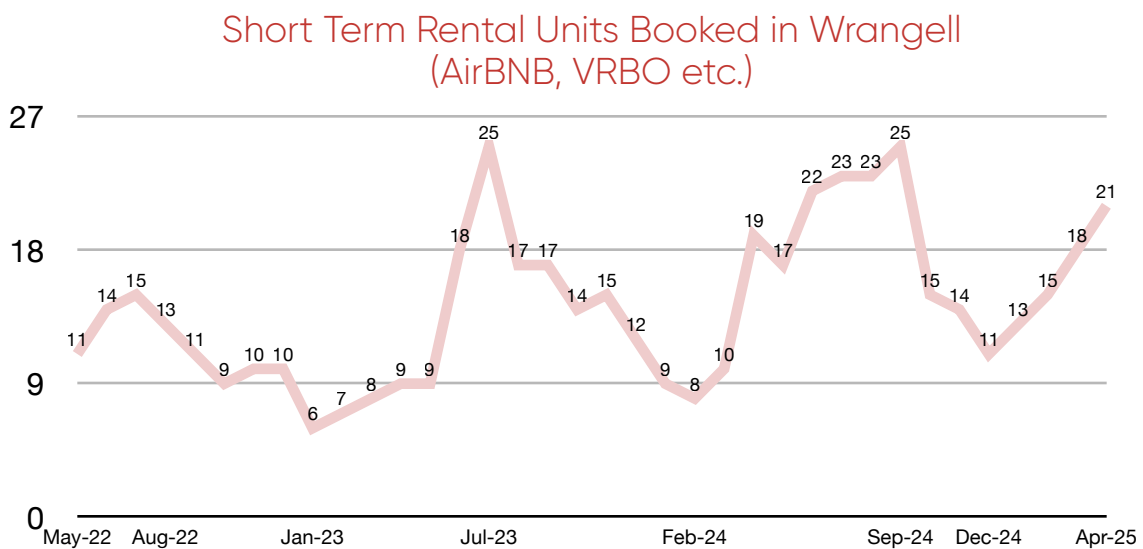
Source: City and Borough of Wrangell

## Short Term Rentals (STRs)

A total of 32 Wrangell units or rooms are currently registered with either Airbnb or VRBO, although many are inactive.

Use of short-term rentals, like Airbnb and Vrbo, remained flat at 25 peak bookings in the summers of 2023 to 2024. In April of 2025, 21 short term rental units had bookings.

The average price per night in 2024 was \$145 per night (this is a fully loaded rate that includes the cleaning fee, Airbnb fee, and taxes). Properties range from \$67 to \$1,400 per night. Half of the listings offer an “entire home,” while the other half offer a single room within a home or more traditional Bed and Breakfast.



Half of the active short-term housing listings offered availability on a seasonal basis only (available for a few days to six months of the year only). Just 16% of Wrangell listings were available all or most of the year (more than 270 days). The average length of stay at a STR in Wrangell in 2024 was 3.2 days.

An analysis of the data identifies no rental housing units that are being diverted to short-term rentals year-round.

## STR Revenue

In 2024, the short term rentals in Wrangell collectively earned \$327,155, a 21% increase over 2023 when the STRs earned \$269,722. The City and Borough of Wrangell has a 6% Public Accommodation Tax which applies to short term rentals, which would have conceptually brought in \$22,900 in tax revenue for the community, if these were fully collected.

### Revenue by STR Unit Type, Wrangell 2024

| Month                                       | Unique  | B&Bs     | Apts     | Houses   | Total Revenue    | Total Nights |
|---|---------|----------|----------|----------|------------------|--------------|
| Registered<br>(not all active)              | 6       | 6 Rooms  | 7        | 13       |                  |              |
| January                                     | \$3,071 | \$952    | \$406    | \$2,666  | <b>\$7,095</b>   | <b>46</b>    |
| February                                    | \$1,797 | \$1,066  | \$141    | \$6,131  | <b>\$9,135</b>   | <b>64</b>    |
| March                                       | \$609   | \$2,251  | \$       | \$8,683  | <b>\$11,543</b>  | <b>102</b>   |
| April                                       | \$2,808 | \$9,073  | \$5,320  | \$18,056 | <b>\$35,257</b>  | <b>253</b>   |
| May   | \$3,594 | \$6,354  | \$2,202  | \$13,562 | <b>\$25,712</b>  | <b>217</b>   |
| June  | \$2,797 | \$9,321  | \$6,161  | \$17,588 | <b>\$35,867</b>  | <b>275</b>   |
| July  | \$9,288 | \$12,295 | \$11,291 | \$21,186 | <b>\$54,060</b>  | <b>364</b>   |
| August                                      | \$4,435 | \$13,878 | \$6,883  | \$28,485 | <b>\$53,681</b>  | <b>361</b>   |
| September                                   | \$6,036 | \$8,804  | \$4,768  | \$22,378 | <b>\$41,986</b>  | <b>276</b>   |
| October                                     | \$1,608 | \$9,036  | \$4,862  | \$7,816  | <b>\$23,322</b>  | <b>182</b>   |
| November                                    | \$6,266 | \$1,909  | \$1,652  | \$6,231  | <b>\$16,058</b>  | <b>99</b>    |
| December                                    | \$2,026 | \$6,013  | \$2,125  | \$3,275  | <b>\$13,439</b>  | <b>123</b>   |
| <b>Total Short Term Rental Revenue 2024</b> |         |          |          |          | <b>\$327,155</b> | <b>2,362</b> |

**Note:** Unique rentals include boats, tents, and tiny homes, for example.

A total of 2,362 room nights were booked in Wrangell in 2024 using AirBNB or VRBO, (the equivalent of a 6 to 7-room hotel being fully booked for a year). The total revenue for these stays was \$327,155, a figure that includes cleaning, but excludes the Wrangell accommodation tax.

## STR Visitation and Spending Analysis

In Wrangell in 2024 there were 196 STRs units booked, resulting in 2,362 room nights (see previous table), and resulting in \$327,155 in total spending to these local accommodation providers. AirDNA also provides the total length of stay by month for Wrangell. An analysis of people per booking was developed to understand total visitors. Based on available data an estimated more than 450 visitors stayed at STRs in Wrangell in 2024. In addition to spending on accommodation, they spent an additional estimated \$214,838 on food, excursions, shopping, and transportation. Based on the full analysis, visitors using STRs spent \$542,000 in Wrangell in 2024.

### Total STR Economic Impact, Wrangell 2024

| Month         | Length of Stay | STR Units booked | People Per Booking | Total people | Total Room Costs | Estimated Visitor Spending (excluding STRs) | Total Estimated Visitor Spending in Wrangell by STR users |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------------|---|---|
| January       | 2.19           | 9                | 1.0                | 9            | \$7,095          | \$1,833                                     | \$8,928   |
| February      | 4.45           | 8                | 1.2                | 10           | \$9,135          | \$3,984                                     | \$13,119  |
| March         | 5.38           | 10               | 1.5                | 15           | \$11,543         | \$7,355                                     | \$18,898  |
| April         | 3.85           | 19               | 2.4                | 46           | \$35,257         | \$16,577                                    | \$51,834  |
| May           | 2.97           | 17               | 1.9                | 32           | \$25,712         | \$17,061                                    | \$42,773  |
| June          | 3.1            | 22               | 2.1                | 46           | \$35,867         | \$26,003                                    | \$61,870  |
| July          | 2.77           | 23               | 3.7                | 84           | \$54,060         | \$42,034                                    | \$96,094  |
| August        | 3.23           | 23               | 3.1                | 71           | \$53,681         | \$41,239                                    | \$94,920  |
| September     | 3.69           | 25               | 1.6                | 39           | \$41,986         | \$25,936                                    | \$67,922  |
| October       | 2.94           | 15               | 4.7                | 70           | \$23,322         | \$19,093                                    | \$42,415  |
| November      | 3.78           | 14               | 1.6                | 23           | \$16,058         | \$8,098                                     | \$24,156  |
| December      | 5.61           | 11               | 1.0                | 11           | \$13,439         | \$5,627                                     | \$19,066  |
| <b>Totals</b> |                | <b>196</b>       | <b>2.14</b>        | <b>454</b>   | <b>\$327,155</b> | <b>\$214,838</b>                            | <b>\$541,993</b>  |

**Sources:** Length of Stay; STR Units booked; and Total Room Costs provided by AirDNA. People Per Booking used AirDNA STR data. Estimated Visitor Spending (excluding STRs) was developed using hotel guest spending in Wrangell Alaska. All analysis is developed by Rain Coast Data.

## Hotel Visitation and Spending Analysis

Wrangell has 82 traditional hotel and bed and breakfast rooms across 12 establishments (that are not double counted by the short-term rental data). In 2024, these traditional establishments booked nearly 3,000 hotel room nights, hosting an estimated 1,423 visitors to Wrangell who spent just over a million dollars for their rooms. To understand additional spending by lodging guests, the analysis below is based on averages, and a known amount of dollars spent in Wrangell in 2024 due to sales tax remittance by spending category. The averages include those who spend nothing in the categories as well. Not every hotel guest participates in excursions or rents a vehicle, for example.

- Visitors spent an average of \$101 per person for food each day (including food, coffee, bars, restaurants, grocery, etc.)
- Visitors spent an average of \$16 per person for shopping each day (including souvenirs, fishing related purchases, etc.)
- Visitors spent an average of \$16 per person for transportation each day (including vehicle rentals, fuel, taxis, and other paid transportation options).
- Visitors spent an average of \$10 per person for excursions each day (including tours and activities).

Based on this analysis, hotel visitors spent an estimated \$1.7 million in Wrangell last year.

### Total Hotel Economic Impact, Wrangell 2024

| Estimated Visitors | Estimated Nights Booked | Total Room Costs | Estimated Spending<br>(excluding hotel costs) | Total Estimated Spending |
|--------------------|-------------------------|------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1,423              | 2,850                   | \$1,056,463      | \$644,129                                     | \$1,700,592              |

## Anan, Stikine, LeConte Tours

Anan Wildlife Observatory, the Stikine River, and LeConte Glacier are three of Wrangell's most significant water-based visitor attractions. The Anan Wildlife Observatory, managed by the U.S. Forest Service, is accessible only by boat or plane and requires a permit during peak season (July 5 to August 25), with daily access limited to 60 commercially guided and 12 independent visitors. In 2023, the site welcomed a record 2,905 visitors—2,357 guided and 548 independent. Not all accessed the site from Wrangell. The Stikine River, known as “the great river” in Tlingit, flows 400 miles from British Columbia and is popular for jet boat tours that explore its rich history, geology, and wildlife; more adventurous visitors may opt for canoeing or kayaking. Nearby, LeConte Glacier—the southernmost tidewater glacier in North America—sits 20 miles from the Stikine River's mouth and offers dramatic calving displays. Tours to the glacier typically last four hours and are also conducted by jet boat.

In 2024, the 8 businesses that provide these tours earned a combined \$1.36 million, 19% more than they earned for the tours in 2023 (\$1.15 million).

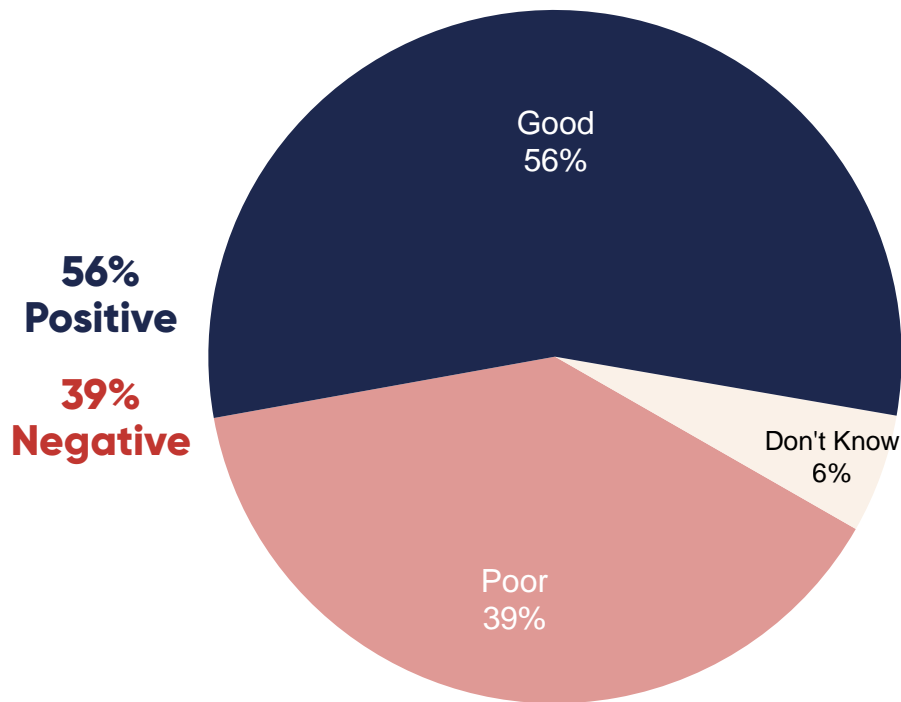


# 2025 Visitor Business Climate Survey

## Current Business Climate

In the spring of 2025 a total of 18 Wrangell business owners and operators in visitor related industries (tourism, restaurants, other food and beverage businesses, accommodation, excursion providers, and others providing services to visitors) responded to the Southeast Conference Business Climate survey, representing a total workforce of 175.

How do you view the overall business climate right now?



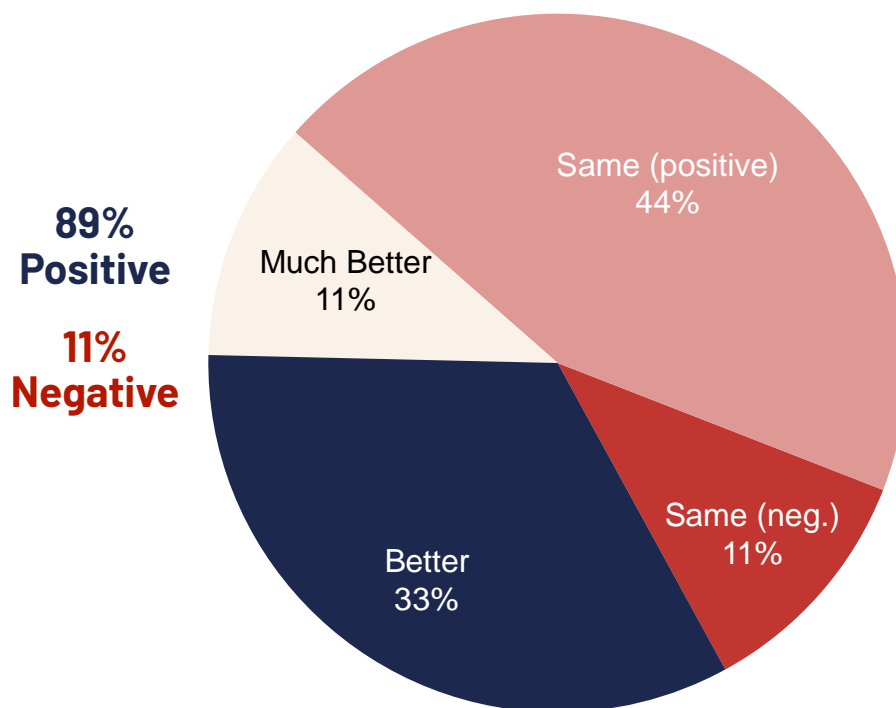
Wrangell Visitor Economy Now: How do you view the overall business climate right now?

In 2025, Wrangell visitor industry business leaders were divided as to the state of the Wrangell business climate. Just over half (56%) of visitor industry business leaders called the business climate good or very good; while 39% called it poor.

An additional 6% said they did not know, however, a lack of business certainty regarding the economy is primarily a negative response when it comes to business.

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Economic Outlook

What is the economic outlook for your business/industry over the next year (compared to the previous year)?



Wrangell Visitor Economy Outlook: What is the economic outlook for your business/industry?

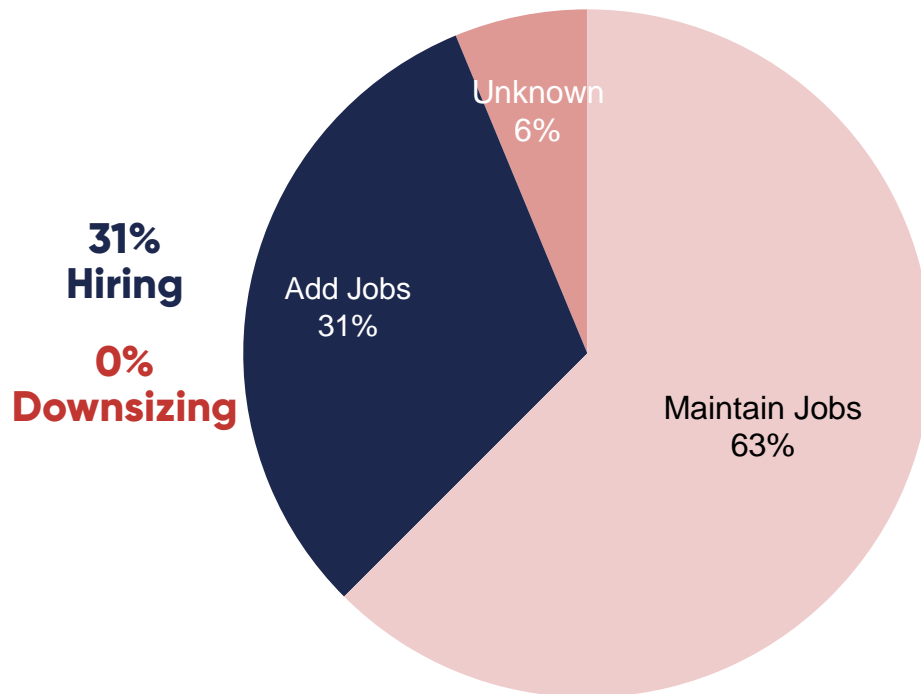
**Economic Future:** In 2025, 89% of respondents describe the economic outlook for their business or industry over the next 12 months as positive; while 11% have a negative outlook.

Nearly half (44%) of survey respondents expect their prospects to be better or much over the next year, an additional 44% of tourism business leaders say their business outlook is similar to current operations — in a positive way.

No tourism business leaders expect the outlook to worsen over the coming year; while 11% say that operations are already going poorly and no change is expected.

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Hiring Projections

Over the next 12 months, do you expect your organization to add jobs, maintain jobs, reduce jobs, or are you unsure?

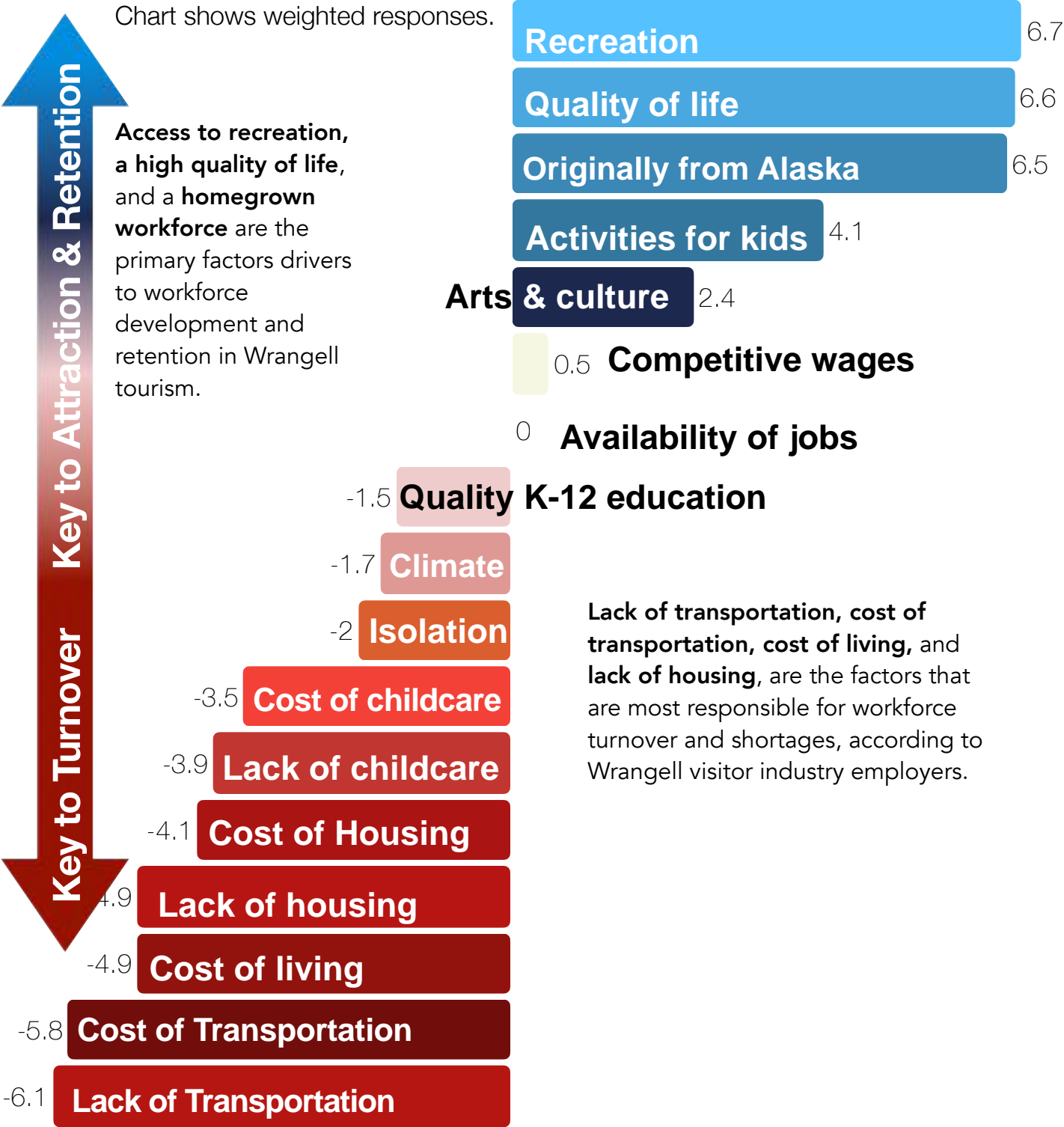


### Employment changes in the next year

When asked about staffing expectations, about a third (31%) anticipate adding new jobs over the next year, and nearly two-thirds of visitor sector business leaders (63%) expect to maintain job levels in the coming year. No business leaders expect to reduce staffing levels.

# Retention & Turnover: How do these factors impact worker attraction & retention?

Wrangell tourism business leaders were asked to rank the impact of 17 elements on workforce attraction, retention, and turnover. This is a weighted ranking of their responses.



## Wrangell Visitor Sector Economic Outlook: Open-Ended Responses

In the spring of 2025, Wrangell visitor industry business leaders were asked to describe their economic outlooks in their own words. These comments were primarily regarding their expectations of the 2025 season.

Tourism is driving strong seasonal growth in Wrangell, but businesses face challenges including workforce shortages, limited ferry and other transportation access, regulatory burdens for sport fishers and guides, and decreasing federal and state investments in infrastructure. Cruise traffic is growing, while independent travelers are seen as more valuable than cruise passengers. Business leaders are optimistic about job creation, visitor demand, and Wrangell's tourism offerings.

- *Tourism is our sector, and we will effectively double in business this year from last. We have added two new employees this year and are anticipating the season to grow significantly again next year and in 2027. So with that, we have been preemptively making plans to create more jobs. The only concerns I have will be not being able to find those employees. But I guess that's a good problem to be facing in the shadow of growth!*
- *The growth we need for stability in our business is dependent on independent travelers. Current dependance on cruise ship traffic is much like expecting every year to have a great fish return. It's the independent traveler that stays longer, spends more money in town and helps promote our community as they travel to other places. Wrangell is a difficult place to visit. Although we have Alaska Airlines flights twice a day, there is a finite number of seats and with stops in Ketchikan and Petersburg northbound, and Juneau, Petersburg and Ketchikan southbound, seats are often not available. If there are seats, they are cost prohibitive. Why fly to Wrangell for \$250 when you can fly to Ketchikan, Juneau or even Sitka for \$99. Our current ferry service is limited to one northbound and one southbound run each week. Although this is scheduled to improve over the next many years, it might help to have a ferry that operates more often from Ketchikan to Hollis, to Coffman Cove to Wrangell and maybe the Petersburg terminal for the IFA. Another ferry can run from Juneau to Petersburg. We are also concerned that the current changes and reduction in the USFS will be detrimental to small businesses if the Federal Government decides to use concessionaires for various venues. Small businesses cannot compete with larger corporations, and we may lose our access and ergo opportunities. This would be catastrophic.*

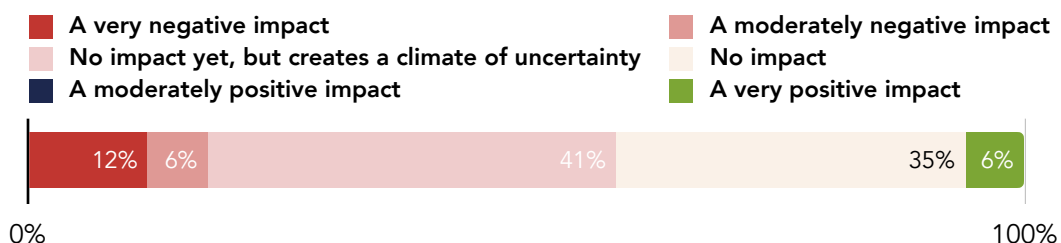
- Tourism has been the primary driver of financial growth for the business I manage. With Wrangell anticipating a 35% surge in visitors this year and further growth projected for 2026, our focus is on maximizing revenue capture from this increased tourism. Additionally, we aim to boost conference reservations, attracting groups from within Southeast Alaska and beyond to utilize our rental space, thereby fostering broader economic development in Wrangell.
- Our business is solid. The cruise industry grows in Wrangell. Sadly as the cruise industry grows the city of Wrangell doesn't have the money to build the infrastructure to maintain the growth. Not enough tour operators to meet the needs of the ships. Operators are aging out and just a few companies will survive into the future. Catch 22. Tourism is the only viable growth industry in town and not enough entrepreneurs are embracing it as an opportunity. We have an average age of 50 years plus as our population. We have a terrific opportunity with the cruise industry if we can get people to step up.
- Lack of foreign travel due to the current Presidential travesty is a huge concern for us. We are also bracing for huge increases in fuel and materials
- Government regulation with the Forest Service and Fish and Game and regulations with Sport Fishing for Halibut and other species make it very hard to sell trips to our area, Wrangell. Every year, more regulations make operating our business harder and harder. Because of all the limits on sport fishing for guests being "guided," it is difficult to meet guests' needs and expectations. They feel they are better off in a "do it yourself" fishing environment where their fish are not as limited as in a "guided" situation. This is especially true for guided, sport halibut fishing. We also guide guests for fly fishing experiences, and the Prince of Wales Forest Service recently shut down guided fishing in their district for the entire month of May for guided fishing. This affects our business greatly. Not only that, but our guests book trips with us up to a year or more in advance, and Prince of Wales Forest Service shut down guided fishing in May only two months before the season. This drastic and last-minute closure creates stress for our guides who need to make changes to our typical fishing areas last minute. We cannot apply for and get new areas added to our Operating Plan in only two months. In our business of guiding sport fishing guests, we are getting more regulations that limit us more every year. The noose is constantly closing in tighter and tighter until we can no longer sell trips to guests because we will have nothing to offer them. It seems that government agencies are trying to limit sport fishing to have an effect on

*the fish populations when the commercial fishing has so much more of an impact. But commercial fishing is not being regulated like sport fishing is. I believe this is because lobbyists pay off government officials to promote their industry. Sport fishing doesn't have the money to lobby politicians. NOAA is there for the commercial industry. They do not consider the money sport fishing brings to Alaska.*

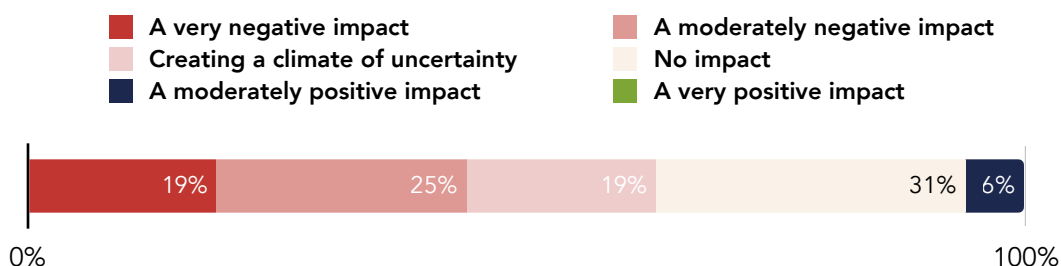
- We need employees to support the 120 days of summer tourism. Biz needs support in customer service training, marketing and signage. Bringing back a Main Street type of program would help to create a more welcoming environment.*
- With more cruise ships scheduled to make port in Wrangell over the next two years, we anticipate growth as long as local workforce can fill the seasonal positions we need to operate at higher capacity.*
- My only challenge is wanting to invite longer-term occupants (Airbnb), but the Website allows multiple, short-term reservations in a given month. I don't have an easy way to manage this any differently. It only affects me and would not alter the outlook for the community, as a whole.*
- new tariffs and discourse with the US admin have possibly had a negative impact on potential travelers to Alaska... inquiries have slowed down considerably the last couple weeks.*
- We are a B&B and Charter Company. We are located in Wrangell. We do not believe the cruise ship or tourism will sustain our community. We need industry. We are concerned about overregulating the Charter Fishing Industry.*
- I believe regionally, Southeast Alaska is struggling to remain united. As smaller communities without infrastructure connecting our economies seeing increased costs and aging populations, we need to be able to open up our economic landscapes not only regionally, but nationally (domestically) in order to encourage local and non-local investment.*

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Federal Impacts

Have the federal job or spending cuts impacted your business?



How do you expect federal changes in Wrangell to impact your business over the next few months?



18% of Wrangell tourism businesses say they have already been negatively impacted by the early federal job and spending cuts that hit the region.

Asked about the business impacts (positive or negative) of the federal changes (i.e. tariffs, executive orders, regulatory, staffing changes, etc.), nearly half (44%) of Wrangell tourism businesses said they expected negative business impacts, including 19% who expect the impacts to be very negative. Another 6% are expecting positive impacts.

Businesses were asked to describe the impacts in their own words: Please describe the impact (positive or negative) you expect the federal changes to have on your business or sector over the coming months (i.e. tariffs, executive orders, regulatory, staffing changes, etc.). Several businesses report negative impacts or concerns from federal changes, including reduced bookings, uncertainty from tariffs, and fewer foreign visitors. Others cite reliance on federal grants or US Forest Service staffing, with potential funding cuts affecting operations. A few see no direct impact, while some support the changes despite expected short-term challenges.

All responses are presented below:

## Wrangell Visitor Sector Federal Impacts: Open-Ended Responses

- *We will see decreased revenue with less federal employees traveling.*
- *We work with private, for profit companies whose clients are ones able to afford vacations. I don't see that we will face any impact from current federal changes.*
- *We are already seeing a dramatic pause in bookings of tours on cruise ships. Historically, our sales to non-cruise passengers increases in March and April, however these bookings have also trickled down to almost zero.*
- *We utilize grants administered by federal agencies to enhance our museum. The lack of funding could impact us in a negative way, especially since we do not have an operating expenditure currently to add & maintain our museum.*
- *Things will get worse before they get better, but I support the federal changes.*
- *Negative due to tariffs, uncertainty, lack of foreign travelers due to fear and mistrust of the USA, uncertain staffing with the USFS and other agencies.*
- *In working with employees in the Forest Service, they are upset and concerned with the budget cuts and employee reduction. We do not feel the effect in our business personally. The government is slow and difficult to work with. Rather than simplify and make processes efficient, they complicate a simple situation and create a bunch of extra paperwork for each scenario. Less funding for the nonsense is good in our opinion and for the business experience.*
- *The important jobs & money will return once this initial process is fully complete.*
- *Layoffs of Federal employees would cause private industries to have to find ways around all the Federal Permitting Processes and Policies. This will negatively impact our environment and the total visitor experience.*
- *Foreign visitors have begun to cancel their cruise trips or independent bookings because of travel concerns with entering and exiting the US. We depend on USFS seasonal staff to maintain rec sites used by tourists. Increased cost of goods essential to this industry (aluminum etc.) make*

*predicting future costs difficult. We have to lock in prices on contracts often two years in advance.*

- People may be less inclined (or able) to travel for pleasure if it becomes too expensive an option for the use of their time and resources.*
- We have a big Alaska Native population. As the administration cancels grants and federal funding it adversely impacts our business and our community.*
- Continued strained US border country relations are not good for Alaska since we are separated by a country from our country. Everyone seems cautious at this time.*

