United States Department of the Interior

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Alaska Region

240 West 5th Avenue, Room 114

Anchorage, Alaska 99501

IN REPLY REFER TO:

C38/W46 (GLBA)

Memorandum

To: Files

Through: Sue E. Masica, Regional Director, Alaska Region *Sue E. Masica 6/13/10*

From: Cherry Payne, Superintendent

Subject: Annual Determination of Cruise Ship Quota – 2011

In accordance with 36 CFR § 13.1160 (b), the 2011 cruise ship seasonal vessel quota will be as follows:

June, July and August: 153 use days
May and September: 92 use days

The year-round daily quota for cruise ships remains at two per day in accordance with the 2003 Vessel Quota Operating Restrictions Environmental Impact Statement (VQOR EIS) Record of Decision (ROD) and existing regulations.

The VQOR EIS ROD states that the determination to increase seasonal quotas for cruise ships will rely on criteria that define the environmental and social conditions to be met before any additional seasonal-use days are approved.

In 2005, an independent Science Advisory Board (SAB) was appointed by Glacier Bay that recommended various studies to assess potential impacts from vessels—including cruise ships--on physical and biological resources. The Board also recommended studies to assess potential impacts to the Huna Tlingit relationship to park resources, and impacts of cruise ships on visitor experience.

In December 2009, the National Park Service convened a meeting that brought together the SAB, principal investigators, and National Park Service scientists and managers to review the results of the first suite of studies. Based on the presentations from the researchers, the Board evaluated the potential impacts of cruise ships and compared these to those impact topics originally analyzed in the VQOR EIS. Their assessment indicates that the original impacts analyses from the VQOR EIS remain accurate. However, the NPS will continue to pursue independently

independently recommended research and monitoring in order to assess the effects of vessel traffic on the environment, as well as their effects on cultural relationships and visitor experience in Glacier Bay.

Areas that warrant additional research include wildlife disturbance, soundscape, and visitor experience.

Therefore, this determination continues, unchanged, the March 31, 2006 final decision for the 2007, 2008, and 2009 season quotas. In May, public comment was solicited via press release and the PEPC website, and only three comments were received. One concessioner concurred with the park's maintaining vessel entries at current levels and the NPS use of the adaptive management approach to cruise ship entries based on the VQOR EIS and the findings of the SAB. An individual commenter wished to see fewer cruise ships, leading ultimately to none, stating that their access "…is going to continue to negatively affect Glacier Bay." A third comment, received from an organization that promotes diversified business opportunities in Alaska, feels the proposal for 153 cruise ships in June, July and August is adequate, but would like to see an increase of ships so that opportunities for passenger numbers could grow and that it would not have an adverse impact on the environment.