



## **Juneau Airport Manager Seeks to Shut Down Coffee Stand in Alaska Seaplanes New Cargo Building Which She Approved**

Locally-Owned Flying Squirrel Espresso in the crosshairs of manager's latest attempt to seize more authority and curtail customer service

**(Juneau, AK – July 10, 2024)** Juneau Airport Manager Patty Wahto is seeking to shut down a successful and locally-owned and operated coffee stand in the Alaska Seaplanes new cargo facility adjacent to the North Terminal of the airport. In an agenda item for the Airport Board meeting for July 11, the Airport Manager claims that the stand is in violation of airport use, even though she approved the use in the building plans before construction began in 2022.

The cargo building was built entirely with Alaska Seaplanes investment, who also solely operate and maintain the facility for the use of their customers.

"We have complied with the CBJ and Airport requirements at every step of this process and we have been completely transparent in our plans to have a small coffee stand operate in this area, as designated in the plans approved by the Airport Manager," said Kent Craford, President and Co-Owner of Alaska Seaplanes. "Flying Squirrel is a great local business providing a welcomed service to Airport clientele, and which is viable in large part because the Airport has no consistent alternative for coffee and snacks outside of the security area – especially for those early morning flights."

Alaska Seaplanes leased the land that the Cargo facility was built on from the CBJ in 2019. That lease expressly allows for "reasonable and customary uses existing historically or at present elsewhere on the airport property."

"It seems as though the Airport Manager is trying to make the case that a coffee stand is not a reasonable and customary service at an airport," said Craford. "If that's the case, I'd like to see another example of an international airport where you can't get a cup of coffee for your flight at 7 in the morning. This spurious action is not only a preposterous waste of time, energy and resources, it is also part of a larger pattern of misguided management by the Airport Manager, and we've had enough of it."

Craford said this dispute over the coffee stand is the tip of the iceberg in a pattern in which the Airport Manager has constructed barriers, in some cases literally, to conducting business at the airport that benefits the residents of Southeast Alaska.

"From creating unnecessary concrete barriers that impede the parking lot to our building, to the woeful signage in the airport - often crude copy-paper taped to the wall, to the refusal to allow us to designate the gate where our passengers meet our pilots, to going rogue on the CBJ-approved second crossing plan, and now this latest attempt to harass Flying Squirrel Espresso and our staff, this conduct that is detrimental to the public needs to stop," Craford said.

The Airport Board meets Thursday, July 11 at 6pm in the Airport Alaska Room and is also available on Zoom. The agenda and Zoom details are at <https://juneau.org/airport/airport-board> .

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