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Til: Firmapost - Sysselmannen på Svalbard
Emne: Forvaltningsplan for Sentral-Spitsbergen

Hello,

As a member of the public and small tour operator, here is my input for the hearing.

You mention large areas of central Spitsbergen are to be protected, in some way or another. This is due to climate change and increase in traffic.

This traffic has mostly been due to tourism. And most of these tourists are coming from cruise ships. Expedition cruise ships get very deep into the field, much more so than the bigger ships, and in my opinion are the most intrusive on the wildlife (polar bear safaris etc).

The only way of controlling this growing industry, at sea but also on land, is by better educating the guides and introducing **a strict and obligatory certification process. Only certified guides should be allowed to take tourists into the field, and tour operators must only recruit certified guides**. This system must be stricter than what is available today.

It is currently too easy for "foreign" tour operators to operate on Svalbard, and their activities goes almost unchecked, except from occasional inspections. If all the guides have been certified in the same manner, then this will restrict the number of eco-crimes which are currently occurring on Svalbard but going unseen.

Only with an obligatory and tough certification process can we protect the place we love the most.

Good luck !

Yann
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