



**City of Gustavus, Alaska**

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**CONTINUE ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SERVICE**

Save our road, save our cities. It's that simple. Alaska Statute (19.65.050) dictates the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) is an essential part of the state transportation system, and that it warrants continued and predictable state support with a steady, stable, and dependable marine highway system service level. In essence, the AMHS service is the **ONLY** road into our maritime towns. Recent budget proposals by the Governor and the Legislature intended to reduce or eliminate AMHS services without a fiscal analysis to justify such action, do not take seriously the life-changing impacts to those who desperately rely on the ferries to survive in rural Southeast Alaska.

Community economies of Southeast Alaska rely heavily on independent travelers for whom the AMHS is the main transportation system. The system provides critical transportation to remote areas where primary and second-home populations reside and work, the backbone of a vital commuting workforce, and year-round life-saving transportation services for those in need of medical services irrespective of often-inclement Southeast weather. With few exceptions, the AMHS provides local businesses with equipment, merchandise, and customers. And let us not forget that all of the above impacts will cause failures in local government that will rely more heavily on the State's assistance to replace the loss of locally-produced funding. Without the service of the AMHS, the majority of Alaska's maritime towns will be hit a devastating blow in a time when growth and success are beginning to gain momentum.

The economic damage caused by eliminating ferry service to Southeast Alaska communities would be profound for the citizens who rely on the AMHS to provide adequate service to meet the health and lifestyle needs of Southeast Alaska customers, businesses, and residents and to meet the expanding needs of the commercial sector, providing increased capacity for goods and services to and from neighboring locations, as well as the lower forty-eight.

Do not end the AMHS vital service conversation simply on current operations. Continued service of the AMHS includes ensuring future service. Significant fiscal forecasting is required to comply with State Statute. More importantly, it is a fundamental responsibility of our State leaders to recognize the need for equal treatment of **ALL** Alaskans. If a bridge collapses or a highway needs repair, would cutting-off the communities serviced by those transportation assets be considered? The Gustavus City Council stresses to the Legislature and the Governor the need to comply with State Statute and provide for the AMHS continuing essential services to the maritime communities of Alaska. Save our road, save our cities. It's that simple.

Calvin Casipit, Mayor