



City of Gustavus, Alaska

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November 7, 2019

Governor Michael Dunleavy
3rd Floor, State Capitol
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Governor Dunleavy:

Save our road, save our cities. It's that simple. Alaska Statute (19.65.050) states 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. We urge your commitment to providing the vital ferry service in accordance with AS 19.65.050. Legislative findings, purpose, and intent for the AMHS.

The recent news of the November 1st press release from Commissioner MacKinnon that the LeConte will be in the yards until a decision is made which vessel, the LeConte or the Aurora, is the most economically viable that will determine which vessel will continue to serve the fleet. If either vessel is removed from service without an immediate replacement, the impact could be catastrophic. The proposed schedule leaves Gustavus, and other communities serviced by the LeConte without service for seven or eight months. As Hoonah is receiving ferry service December 1st by the Malaspina and December 25th by the Matanuska to Sitka and return to Juneau it is requested that Gustavus be added to the route. In addition, please consider using either, or both, the Malaspina and Matanuska to replace service usually provided by the LeConte.

Imagine, no ability during winter to restock provisions, make appointments for medical needs, acquire materials and equipment for emergent repairs to your home. Sure, you may be able to take a small plane if the weather allows – which is incredibly unreliable during the winter. What if you are not physically able to board a small plane because of disabilities? You just can't rely on air travel in Southeast during winter.

The no-ferry period is so long that it spans winter into summer. This is the time you prepare for your economic period, whether for business or otherwise. Ferries here move more than just cars. *They move our economy!* The ferry LeConte carries Gustavus residents to Juneau for shopping and home with purchases efficiently and economically. As with many Alaskan communities, *ours is a visitor economy.* The ferry enables a second travel channel for visitors from the Lower 48 to and throughout Southeast Alaska. They arrive in Gustavus with motor vehicles, bicycles, boats on trailers, kayaks, fishing and hunting equipment. They hire our guides, our tour boats, stay at our lodges, explore Glacier Bay and Icy Strait, and visit our

galleries and shops. Each trip generates business at both ends—business that supports employment and contributes vital local sales and bed tax revenue. *A trip not taken generates no business.*

The economic damage caused by eliminating ferry service to Southeast Alaska communities for eight months 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. Please don't forget those of us in the rural coastal Southeast. Please hear our voice as we emphasize the importance of this transportation backbone of rural coastal Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Calvin Casipit".

**Calvin Casipit
Mayor, City of Gustavus**

**Cc: U.S. Senator Murkowski
U.S. Senator Sullivan
U.S. Representative Young
Alaska State Senator Keihl
Alaska State Representative Hannan
Alaska Municipal League
Southeast Conference
Glacier Bay National Park**