



For Immediate Release
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Governor Dunleavy, DOT Commissioner Anderson Announce AMHS Infrastructure Plan

December 4, 2021 (Kodiak) – Today, Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy and Transportation Commissioner Ryan Anderson announced their plan to re-energize the Alaska Marine Highway System. Among the significant capital investments is a new ocean-class vessel to replace the 57-year-old Tustumena ferry.

“The Tusty has been plying rough seas for nearly 60 years and is approaching the end of its service life. Annual repairs for the vessel now reach \$2 million,” **said Governor Dunleavy**. “I’ve asked DOT to replace this key piece of infrastructure to ensure connectivity for our coastal communities for another 50 years.”

The marine highway serves 35 communities in Alaska and transports goods, vehicles and passengers between communities. The ocean highway also links coastal communities to Alaska’s highway and rail network.

The replacement vessel is estimated to cost \$200 million to \$250 million and will be competitively bid. The new ship is expected to begin service in 2027. The new ship’s vehicle and passenger capacity would increase by 40 percent over the Tustumena, from 34 to 52 vehicles and from 160 to 250 passengers.

“The new vessel will make the fleet more resilient and responsive to the needs of coastal communities—through more passenger and vehicle space, but also more fuel efficient engines, diesel and electric propulsion systems, and an efficient design to move through the water easily,” said DOT Commissioner Ryan Anderson. “It will be built to serve coastal communities throughout our system, allowing flexibility to move our ships around during annual lay-ups.”

The Alaska Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) will fund the vessel over multiple years using federal funds.

Other marine highway upgrades include:

- \$8 million in upgrades to the Tusty to extend her service life.
- The ability for passengers to plan trips around a reliable schedule. An 18-month schedule of ferry sailings became available for the first time on AMHS last summer.
- Crew quarters going in on the M/V Hubbard in a project estimated to cost \$16 million. If the project is awarded in state, it will mean more jobs for Alaskans.
- A newly established essential ferry service for rural communities with a potential for \$1 billion in funding from the infrastructure act.
- Backup ferry service for M/V LeConte, while the ship is in annual overhaul maintenance.
- A targeted recruitment program for maritime workers, given the global shortage.

Read the full list on the [Re-Energize AMHS factsheet](#) at this link.

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