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**AMHS Requests Proposals for Tustumena Replacement Vessel
State uses CM/GC project delivery method to deliver new ship on time, on budget.**

(KETCHIKAN, Alaska)—Replacing the M/V Tustumena with a modern, efficient, ocean-class ferry is closer to reality as the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) issued a [Request for Proposals \(RFP\)](#) for a replacement vessel this week. The RFP asks for proposals from qualified companies to provide preconstruction services under the Construction Manager/General Contractor (CM/GC) project delivery method for the new ferry.

While CM/GC is a project delivery method approved by the Federal Highway Administration, using it in Alaska in the past required a lengthy administrative review. In 2021 Governor Dunleavy introduced legislation clearing bureaucratic hurdles for the state, allowing for its use on a wider variety of projects. Governor Dunleavy signed the bill into law in July of last year.

A CM/GC project comprises two distinct contract operational phases: preconstruction and construction. In the CM/GC project delivery method, the department relies on the contractor to provide expertise on constructability, sequencing, means and methods, and material costs and availability, in order to better enable the project team to deliver a quality product—within budget and on schedule.

The successful bidder will be awarded a preconstruction services contract for the initial phase of the project. The contractor will participate in design validation, constructability review, and cost estimating. Their preconstruction responsibilities do not include a provision of architectural and professional engineering services.

Under the CM/GC model, the department also procures the services of a third party, Independent Cost Estimator (ICE), who will review project documents and develop a separate construction cost estimate. As the preconstruction phase draws to a close, the contractor will develop its Guaranteed Maximum Price (GMP) proposal, representing its total price to construct the project. If the department and the contractor cannot come to terms on a GMP, the preconstruction services contract will end, and the department will pursue other project delivery methods, or can simply terminate the project.

The new vessel will be capable of operating across the Gulf of Alaska and will provide service to Homer, Kodiak, and Unalaska, along with all current AMHS ports of call along the route. Due to operational and environmental constraints, the vessel will possess a unique vehicle elevator/turntable design similar to the existing Tustumena. The state is designing and building the ship to be able to work throughout Southeast Alaska, adding flexibility and efficiency to the fleet. This approach will be particularly useful when other AMHS ships are offline.

The cost of construction for the new vessel is estimated to be between \$200 to \$250 million and is expected to begin service around 2027. The new ship's vehicle and passenger capacity would increase by 40 percent over the current vessel, from 34 to 52 vehicles and from 160 to 250 passengers. The new vessel will benefit from fuel-efficient engines, diesel-electric propulsion systems, and a hull designed for hydrodynamic efficiency.

The current Tustumena is a 57-year-old ocean-class vessel. Due to the age of the ship, annual repairs now reach around \$2 million.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities oversees 237 airports, 10 ferries serving 35 communities along 3,500 of marine miles, over 5,600 miles of highway and 776 public facilities throughout the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to "Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."