



For Immediate Release

State Warns Inlandboatman's Union its decision to Strike is Illegal, Unprotected

Serious legal and financial consequences for shutting down ferry system based on an illegal contract offer

Wednesday, July, 24, 2019 (Anchorage) – Alaska Department of Administration Commissioner Kelly Tshibaka is calling on the Inlandboatman's Union (IBU) to end its strike, return to the negotiating table, and remove the portions of its contract offer that the State believes are unlawful and likely constitute an unfair labor practice.

"The state did not want a work stoppage, nor does the State believe the strike is necessary to reach an agreement. If anything, it will be detrimental to negotiations and is going to seriously harm the communities and Alaskans served by the ferry system," **said Commissioner Kelly Tshibaka.**

It is the position of the State that the latest contract proposal from the IBU contains one or more unlawful provisions. The IBU has within the last 24 hours removed one of those unlawful provisions. We continue to urge the IBU to return to the bargaining table and work toward an agreement that is fair to the employees it represents, fair to the other State of Alaska employees, and fiscally responsible in today's budget environment.

The consequences for going on strike over an unlawful contract proposal could be extreme for the IBU and State employees represented by IBU and their families.

- The strike would not be lawful and could make employees who walk off the job unprotected, meaning they are subject to summary termination from State employment
- The IBU could have to reimburse the State for any and all damages caused by the unlawful strike, which includes lost revenues from ferry operations and costs related to the strike
- Striking employees will not be paid and could have to pay for their own health coverage through COBRA or do without health coverage for themselves and their families

"It is my sincere hope that striking employees represented by the IBU ask themselves if the strike is really in their best interest, the best interest of their families, the coastal communities and the Alaskans they faithfully serve," **said Commissioner Tshibaka.**

The strike will bring the entire Alaska Marine Highway System to a halt. The ships have arrived or will soon arrive at ports where passengers can be dropped off and the ships safely stored. Reservations are not being accepted until further notice and full refunds are being issued to all ticket holders. DOT staff are working diligently to assist passengers not at their final destination.

The Federal Mediator recommended mediations continue due to the cooperation demonstrated by the State. He opposed the “last best offer” made by the union. “We have asked the IBU to keep meeting and bargaining, as requested by the Federal Mediator, but so far they have declined any further invitation to meet and talk,” **said Commissioner Tshibaka.** “We urge the IBU leaders to return to the negotiating table so we can strike a fair deal for both the employees and the State and get the ferries sailing again.”

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