Welcome: Prince William Sound Ferry Terminals -Draft Environmental Assessment Online Open House – Text Only

THIS ONLINE MEETING AND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD ARE NOW CLOSED.

Public Comment Period: Monday, October 27 – Tuesday, November 11, 2025

Welcome and thank you for your interest in the Prince William Sound (PWS) Ferry Terminals project. The environmental document prepared for this project is an Environmental Assessment (EA), which evaluates proposed improvements to ferry terminal dock facilities in three PWS communities: Chenega, Cordova, and Tatitlek. The improvements, which vary at each site, are necessary to maintain critical ferry service to these communities as the current fleet of Aurora Class Ferry vessels are removed from service and replaced by new Alaska Class Ferries.

The purpose of this online open house is to share the draft EA's findings and seek comments on the proposed action and mitigation measures.

This online platform is open from Monday, October 27 – Tuesday, November 11, 2025.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us! To provide feedback on the Draft EA and Appendices, you may visit the project website.

Navigating This Site

This is the Text Only version of this online open house.

If you need any additional assistance navigating this website, please email comments@pwsferryterminals.com.

Purpose and Need

EAs require a brief introduction describing what the project hopes to achieve and why the project is needed. Alternatives are considered based on how well they address the project's purpose and need statement.

PWS Ferry Terminal EA Purpose

The Project would make improvements to the Chenega, Cordova, and Tatitlek ferry terminals to accommodate the new Alaska Class Ferry berthing and home port needs to support continued reliable AMHS ferry service into the future.

Need for the Project

The existing Chenega and Tatitlek ferry terminal facilities are fixed platform docks that only accommodate vessels with attached vehicle ramps, which are aging out of service. The Alaska Class Ferries require installation of a vehicle transfer system at the facilities to operate at these terminals.

The existing Cordova ferry terminal facility includes side and stern berths for AMHS ferry vessels. The terminal would require modification to the mooring dolphins to better accommodate the newly built Alaska Class Ferry vessel's (MV Hubbard) mooring line system.

No Action Alternative

A No Action alternative is required as a baseline for comparison and helps evaluate the extent of potential project impacts. Under the No Action Alternative, no changes or improvements would occur to the existing

Chenega, Cordova, or Tatitlek ferry terminals.

Why this is important:

Under a No Action Alternative, none of the three facilities would meet the requirements for the new Alaska Class Ferry vessels. After the Aurora Class Ferry vessels are retired, the three terminals would no longer receive reliable ferry service, and the communities would lose their primary transportation source for goods, services, economic opportunities, and access to urban necessities such as medical care. Alternative transportation methods would be more costly and less reliable.

For more information on the No-Action Alternative, see Section 2.2.

Proposed Action – Chenega

The Chenega dock and tidal ramps were originally constructed in 1995 to provide a terminal for the MV Bartlett. The MV Bartlett was decommissioned and sold in 2003, and Chenega is currently serviced by Aurora Class Ferry vessels.

The Proposed Action at the Chenega ferry terminal would:

- Install piles to support an approach trestle, shoreward vehicle transfer bridge abutment, two lift towers with a mechanical support system or float to support the seaward end of the bridge, and three mooring dolphins.
- Install 30 temporary steel-pipe piles to support pile installation during construction.
- Modify the existing fendering system on the existing dock face.
- Install an on-site generator and generator building to power the bridge mechanical lift system and apron hydraulics, and new pedestrian/vehicle lighting along the new bridge.
- Install solar-powered marker lights on the new dolphins to aid with vessel approach and mooring operations.

Pile installation would be conducted using both a vibratory and impact hammer as well as down-the-hole (DTH) pile installation methods.

For more information, see Section 1.2.1.

Proposed Action – Cordova

Cordova's original facility was built in 1968 and has been improved and expanded over the years. The current stern berth has a shallow-water approach that occasionally causes landing issues for larger Alaska Class Ferry vessels. The MV Aurora uses the side birth and is the only vessel currently able to serve Cordova.

The Proposed Action at the Cordova ferry terminal would:

- Remove five, three-pile, floating fender dolphins; two, four-pile, fixed fender dolphins; and one, two-pile, catwalk support dolphin. These would be replaced with three new, four-pile, fixed fender dolphins and five, five-pile, floating fender dolphins.
- Modify the catwalk for dolphin access.
- Modify pedestrian walkways and elevated steel platforms.
- Upgrade electrical and power systems.
- Replace portions of the fuel lines.
- Replace sewer and potable water lines on the transfer bridge.
- Replace the sewer holding tank float system.
- Replace the stern berth potable water line.
- Replace the existing 4,000-gallon sewer-holding tank with a 10,000-gallon one. Replace all associated lines.

- Replace the existing shore power conductors with increased capacity conductors to accommodate Alaska Class Ferry power demands.

Pile installation would be conducted using both a vibratory and impact hammer, and pile removal would use a vibratory hammer.

For more information, see Section 1.2.2.

Proposed Action – Tatitlek

The Tatitlek ferry terminal is a multipurpose dock structure that was originally constructed in 1995 to accommodate the MV Bartlett, which was decommissioned and sold in 2003. The current dock at Tatitlek only supports stern berthing from Aurora Class Ferry vessels.

The Proposed Action at the Tatitlek ferry terminal would:

- Remove the existing dolphin, catwalk, and tide ramp structures.
- Install a shoreward vehicle transfer bridge abutment.
- Install two lift towers and bridge mechanical support system for the seaward end of the bridge.
- Install catwalks to each lift tower.
- Upgrade fendering system on the existing dock face.
- Install two mooring dolphins.
- Install an on-site generator and generator building to power the bridge mechanical lift system, apron hydraulics, and new pedestrian/vehicle lighting along the new bridge.
- Install solar-powered marker lights on the new dolphins and existing dock face to aid with vessel approach and mooring operations.
- Install up to 20 temporary steel-pipe piles to support pile installation during construction.

Pile installation would be conducted using both a vibratory and impact hammer as well as DTH pile installation methods. Pile removal would be conducted using a vibratory hammer.

For more information, see Section 1.2.3.

Affected Environment

This EA looked at 23 different types of resources across physical, natural, and human environments in each of the three communities that would be impacted by the Proposed Action.

Impacts could be temporary (construction-related), permanent (operation-related), or increase over time (cumulative), as well as adverse or beneficial.

General Findings:

- Socioeconomic, Public Health and Safety, and Marine Traffic and Navigation impacts of the proposed action are primarily substantial and beneficial. Larger Alaska Class Ferry vessels can accommodate more passengers and vehicles, allowing for continued service from the newer fleet of Alaska Class Ferry vessels, ensuring continued access for communities with more reliable service, and potentially increasing tourism and economic development within the region.
- Impacts for other resources are primarily minor or temporary, with no anticipated long-term adverse effects.
- Potential cumulative impacts would be localized to areas with already active ferry terminals.

For more information on the Affected Environment and Environmental Consequences, see Chapter 3

Mitigation Measures

Potential adverse impacts would occur primarily during construction and are expected to be temporary. DOT&PF seeks to avoid or minimize impacts by:

- Prioritizing the use of a vibratory hammer to reduce the level of underwater noise and potential impacts on fish and hatchery operations, as well as marine mammals.
- Where impact hammers are required, piles would be driven as deep as possible with a vibratory hammer first then be driven into their final position with an impact hammer.
- Driving piles when the current is reduced in areas of strong current to minimize the number of fish exposed to adverse levels of underwater sound.
- Removing piles completely rather than cutting them off at the mudline.
- Employing Protected Species Observers to monitor for protected marine mammal species during in-water construction.
- Avoiding placing fill material into wetlands.
- Minimizing the number of piles that would be placed within Waters of the United States.
- Removing vegetation only within areas where vegetation has been previously removed or disturbed.
- Using light transmitting decking to prevent submerged aquatic vegetation loss and bed fragmentation due to lighting.
- Disposing of creosote-treated timber piles and other construction debris in an approved upland location to prevent reuse in the marine environment.

Are there other mitigations DOT&PF should consider to reduce construction impacts?

What to Expect During Construction

Construction is anticipated to occur in Cordova beginning late fall of 2026 and the spring through fall of 2027. Chenega and Tatitlek construction is planned to occur in fall 2027 through summer of 2028. AMHS schedules would see short-term delays during construction, and traffic patterns may change during terminal construction in each community.

Alternative service may be available during the construction period by private charter vessel. Airplane service, commercial freight, recreational boating, and commercial fishing traffic would continue within the terminal areas, and access to adjacent harbors and docks would remain available during construction.

The construction schedule and any anticipated disruptions to ferry service would be publicized in advance.

Are there community events or other needs DOT&PF should be aware of as it develops its construction schedule?

Agency and Public Involvement

DOT&PF launched the project with a 30-day scoping period in September 2024, and agencies have been involved throughout the planning process to help identify possible impacts, issues, and opportunities to be studied in the EA. Scoping letters were also sent to Tribes and Native corporations in September 2024, while Section 106 initiation letters were sent to Tribes, agencies, and organizations in October 2024.

Schedule

The EA process informs project development by determining the significance of potential environmental effects of a proposed federal action, resulting in either a determination to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) or a finding of no significant impact (FONSI).

DOT&PF will also need to obtain federal, state, and local permits prior to construction.

If approved, construction would begin in 2027.

Contact Us & More Information

Thank you for visiting our Online Open House, which is live from Monday, October 27 – Tuesday, November 11, 2025. It will be archived on the project website for later reference.

While comments are welcome at any time, the public comment period on the draft EA is from Monday, October 27 – Tuesday, November 11, 2025.

Please submit your comments today through the following methods:

Online at https://pwsferryterminals.com

By email at comments@pwsferryterminals.com

If you would like to be kept informed of EA's progress, sign up for the email list.

End of Online Meeting

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