

March 19, 2019

Dear Co-Chair Stutes, Co-Chair Wool, and Transportation Committee Members:

Thank you for this opportunity to testify. The City of Whittier expresses its support for the Alaska Marine Highway ferry service in Whittier and Alaska, while recognizing the financial challenges the State faces regarding the Marine Highway. Whittier would encourage homeporting its ferry which would likely provide less expensive housing options for crews and provide access to the Seward Highway just minutes away.

My background: I most recently served as the City Manager for Seward for nearly seven years. During this time I had the great fortune to work with great councils and staff as we developed the Seward Marine Industrial Center, the new Breakwater, and Uplands in addition to replacing aged docks in the harbor. The work in the Industrial Center has resulted in economic growth via new business development, expanded existing businesses, and generated millions of dollars in business revenue.

My new challenge is to assist in developing Whittier to its full potential and aid Alaska by serving not only as a new port site, but be identified as an official backup in the event of an emergency in Anchorage. We are located on the northernmost ice free deep water Bay in South Central. The City owns the tidelands within its seventeen mile boundary area.

The Head of the Bay is deep and requires minimum initial dredging due to the fact sedimentation on the north side is virtually nonexistent. There is also an existing rail spur running alongside the city road terminating near the Bay. Many acres are available for development and more may be made available by the City moving its well site.

Alaska’s challenge to be prepared for any eventuality has been ignored for many years, if not decades. No one port can provide the transportation and freight security that we need and should be required. We hope you recognize this fact and consider Whittier as a viable option and answer as you move forward with your deliberations.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jim Hunt

City Manager

For the City of Whittier, Alaska

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Attachment: Image of Whittier: Head of Bay

