



Municipality of Anchorage

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor

January 20, 2020

Representative Louise Stutes
State Capitol Room 408
Juneau, Alaska, 99801

Representative Adam Wool
State Capitol Room 412
Juneau, Alaska, 99801

Re: Importance of Alaska Marine Highway System to Alaska

Dear Representative Stutes and Wool,

Before Alaska had oil, the pipeline, or the Dalton highway, we had the Marine Highway system. In a state without roads, we rely on our waterways to be our highways. For more than fifty years, ferries have linked our communities, spurred economic development, and been a source of statewide identity and pride. Through boom and bust, Alaskans prioritized the transportation system that connects us.

Anchorage is an Alaska Marine Highway city -- even though we do not have a ferry dock, Anchorage benefits from a functional and robust marine highway system.

Anchorage is the top destination for Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) travelers. More than half of visitors who travel on the AMHS pass through Anchorage. These visitors typically spend \$1700 per person during the course of their Alaska visit, compared to \$1300 for other travelers. In a city where the tourism industry accounts for one in nine jobs, we benefit from the prosperity the Marine Highway system delivers.

Goods and services from some 500 Alaska businesses support the daily operation of the AMHS, resulting in an infusion of millions of dollars throughout the Alaska economy. Anchorage businesses receive the third highest share of that spending.

And Anchorage is a destination and waystation for many of our Prince William Sound neighbors -- who come here to shop, to socialize, for medical care and for onward travel. We also use the ferry ourselves. Anchorage and Mat-Su account for 15% of AMHS revenue from Alaskans.

Just as we expect the state to maintain the Glenn and Seward highways, as well as the many roads inside the Municipality, we count on the state to maintain our Marine Highway system. And while we enjoy the drive to Whittier, I look forward to the day when AMHS ferries get a berth in Anchorage.

Ethan Berkowitz