

Committee Members:

I am writing to support House Joint Resolution No. 15, a resolution Requesting the United States Department of Defense to invest in the Port of Alaska.

Port of Alaska is a Municipality of Anchorage owned and operated facility that serves local, State and National interests. It provides critical cargo support to U.S. military facilities and operations across Alaska, including Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson (JBER), Fort Wainwright, Eielson AFB and Fort Greely. It also enables economic freight delivery to United States Coast Guard Station Kodiak.

Port of Alaska serves three basic functions:

1. Commerce (local, state, nation) – Port of Alaska is the state’s primary inbound cargo facility that handles about half of all Alaska inbound cargo – some 4.7 million tons freight and fuel in 2020 – about half of which is delivered to final destinations outside of Anchorage, statewide, including Southeast Alaska.
2. Disaster response and recovery – Port of Alaska is critical transportation infrastructure that is needed to support timely and successful State and Federal disaster response for events ranging from earthquakes to pandemics.
3. National Defense – Port of Alaska is one of 17 Department of Defense (DoD)-designated U.S. Commercial Strategic Seaports worldwide. It handles the vast majority of DoD’s Alaska inbound and outbound freight except for munitions and explosives. It is strategically located less than 9.5 hours by air from 90 percent of the industrial world. And it is the best existing port in the United States to support development and defense of U.S. Arctic interests and shipping routes.

DoD, State of Alaska, and Port of Alaska in Anchorage interests are intertwined. DoD activities boost Alaska’s economy – some \$3.5 billion in FY 2018 – with spending from DoD personal salaries, defense contracts, facility construction, etc. It also attracts related industries and business investments and generates state and local government tax revenues.

Port of Alaska is a member of the National Port Readiness Network that supports readiness for force deployment during contingencies and other national defense emergencies. The network includes nine federal agencies and organizations:

- Maritime Administration (MARAD)
- U.S. Coast Guard
- Military Sealift Command (MSC)
- U.S. Army Forces Command (USFORSCOM)
- U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM)
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE)
- U.S. Northern Command (USNORTHCOM)
- Transportation Security Administration (TSA)
- Surface Deployment and Distribution Command (SDDC) MARAD

Port of Alaska supports national defense missions across Alaska, the Pacific Rim and the Arctic under a MARAD Port Readiness Plan (PRP) to:

- Provide port facilities, including at least 2,200 horizontal-feet of cargo dock, 25 acres of lay-down yard, plus additional facilities, and services for DoD use to support military deployments, including “surge capacity” for sudden, large movements of military assets during a national emergency or combat-ready surge deployments

- Port resiliency to maintain strategic cargo flow necessary during disasters that require response through the port
- Direct, connection by secure haul road and fuel pipeline to JBER. Virtually all jet fuel used by JBER is delivered from Port of Alaska
- Supports major troop deployments from Alaska bases via road and rail connections
- Provides provisions consumed at Alaska's military bases, including some 19,000 active-duty personnel and 26,000 dependents who live on OCONUS road systems (about 20 percent of all Port of Alaska fuel and cargo is DoD-related)

DoD interests pay commercial cargo fees and tariffs for cargo transported through Port of Alaska, but they pay no additional compensation to maintain PRP-required minimum facilities and capacities that exceed Port of Alaska's market (commerce) needs. Consequently, the PRP is effectively an unfunded Federal mandate to provide facilities and capacities that it does not otherwise need.

Port of Alaska's aging cargo terminals have long exceeded their design and economic life and are likely to start closing due to corrosion and loss of load-bearing capacity in as few as five years if they are not replaced – regardless of any repair efforts, possibly sooner if there is another big earthquake. The Port of Alaska Modernization Program (PAMP) aims to replace these aging marine terminals and related facilities before they fail. It will:

- Replace aging docks and related infrastructure
- Improve operational safety and efficiency
- Accommodate modern shipping operations
- Improve port resiliency – to survive extreme seismic events and Cook Inlet's harsh marine environment.

Anchorage Port Commission passed a resolution in 2020 to support of DoD investment in the PAMP, to enable Port of Alaska to continue to fulfil its PRP obligations. This resolution specifically addressed inclusion of DoD funding authority in the MARAD authorization bill. While that authorization did not come forward in legislation, it is important that other bodies recognize Port of Alaska's unique challenges and strategic importance, particularly with expanding national security activities in the Arctic and Pacific Rim.

In summary, the State of Alaska should encourage DoD funding to enable the modernization (replacement) of Port of Alaska cargo terminals and related facilities that are needed to maintain strategic readiness and resiliency. Port of Alaska's marine terminals are failing and must be replaced to support ongoing DoD and Coast Guard operations and bases in Alaska, as well as State/Federal assets in contingency airfields, Remote Early Warning Systems, and the Kodiak Launch Facility.

Thank you for considering my support of HJR-15. My interest is to see that Alaska continues to support DoD facilities, members, and families in our state, and to recognize the vital role that Port of Alaska plays to meet these interests.

Sincerely,

Bob Pawlowski

Bob Pawlowski
 Captain, NOAA (Ret)
 Vice-Chair, Anchorage Port Commission