

Committee Members:

I am Captain Bob Pawlowski, NOAA (Ret) and Vice-Chair of the Port of Alaska Port Commission. I am writing on behalf of myself to support HJR 15 and answer a question posed to me by Representative Fields Office. After conferring with the Port Director, I offer comments on the question referencing "DOD involvement in the Port and specifically whether DOD has reaffirmed the strategic nature/their priority in the port since it was first labeled as a strategic port 17 years ago.

Simply stated, DOD is not looking to any other location in Alaska as the port is recognized as a viable commercial entity that offers multi-intermodal options for freight, equipment, fuel, cement, and specialized support for DOD, as it does for the vast majority of daily commerce needs in Alaska. This is recognized by DOD in the quarterly reports that affirm the port's ability to continue the future support their mission and build upon the 17 years of unimpeded support that they have grown to depend on.

As I shared in previous comments, approximately 20% of the goods moved through the port directly support the DOD strategic interest in Alaska's global strategic position. This includes direct involvement in movement of equipment in and out of Alaska as strategic deployments, such as the upcoming 200 pieces coming via rail from Fairbanks for movement to the Lower 48. Movement such as this are common as equipment is both brought in and taken out as strategic needs change. These movement, as with others, depend on contracts with commercial carriers, like TOTE and Matson, as well as contract Military Sealift Command ships making calls to the port. However, this is clearly visible action of support as it is coordinated with DOD in every step of the way.

On the day-day basis, critical commodities are moved to DOD on a daily basis. Whether it is fuel for the aircraft and equipment on JBER, cement for the annual military construction spending that has supports the ability to have new squadrons located to the Air Force bases, to build infrastructure for Army Forts as the strategic needs in the Pacific Rim and Arctic increase. The port also provides the conduit by which commodities for daily life are available to meet DOD interest and assure a quality of life for personnel and dependents stationed in Alaska are met.

In addition, I encourage the Committee to discuss with TOTE, Matson, and the various agents that have long term commercial relationships with DOD and understand their dependence on a fully functional intermodal support. Whether the commodity is handled by Roll-On-Roll Off (TOTE), Container (Matson), or dockside for fuel, cement and specialized needs, the DOD has confidence in knowing that their strategic interests has been and will continue to be met by the Port of Alaska.

Finally, I have shared this answer with the Port Director for his knowledge. I have also attached a March 23, 2021 letter from General Krumm, the Alaska Command Commander, that validates DOD interest in that the Port of Alaska is vital to their interest and a foundation for their strategic supply chain.

Thank you for considering this in your deliberation and support of HJR 15. If you need further information, please contact me at 907-301-2464 or cptbob@gci.net.

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