



THE STATE  
*of* **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

**Department of Public Safety**

DIVISION OF ALASKA WILDLIFE TROOPERS  
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January 06, 2014

The Honorable Tammie Wilson  
House of Representatives  
1292 Sadler Way Ste. 304  
Fairbanks, AK 99701

REF: Patrol Vessel Woldstad

Dear Representative Wilson:

Recently, a decision was made to decommission the P/V Woldstad (Kodiak) and with legislative approval, use existing funding (\$2.3 mil) and funds garnered from the sale of the Woldstad to purchase a smaller class vessel of approximately 58 feet. The decision to decommission the Woldstad wasn't taken lightly, but faced with mission changes in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska; along with the need to spend a considerable of amount of money to complete substantial upgrades to the Woldstad, all necessitated this course of action.

The Woldstad was commissioned in 1982 and has served the Division admirably for over 30 years. When the vessel was originally built it included a complex propulsion system, which is now outdated and the engines are also in need of replacement. The engines are several thousand hours past overhaul recommendations and because of their age, it is much more cost effective to purchase new fuel efficient engines. In FY 2013, DPS received \$2.4 mil to purchase new engines and to replace the obsolete propulsion system. The Department was moving in that direction until a marine survey of the vessel was completed and noted several other upgrades were needed to make the replacement systems compatible with the existing other operational systems; such as electrical to make the necessary upgrades would require another \$1.35 mil to complete. Since the Woldstad has not been to a shipyard for routine maintenance in almost five years we anticipate an additional \$300k in normal shipyard repairs to make the Woldstad fully operational.

The Department has been struggling to find meaningful missions for two large vessels in and around the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. Currently, we have the 121' P/V Woldstad and 156' P/V Stimson in Dutch Harbor to patrol these areas. With the regulatory changes made in the Bering Sea in 2005, with BSAI crab rationalization or IFQ / CDQ harvest program and adding Vessel Monitoring System (VMS) to vessels



participating in Federal fisheries, the need for pre-season and post season patrols have diminished greatly reducing the need of maintaining two large vessels.

These changes have over the year's required Division leadership to search for new missions for the vessels that are productive and a wise use of our resources or assists.

Even after looking at new ways to deploy our two large vessels it has become apparent that currently only one large vessel is needed to patrol the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska. It should be noted that both vessels play an important role in our Bristol Bay Salmon enforcement program from June 15<sup>th</sup> – July 25<sup>th</sup> each year.

With the continuing changes of fisheries and the rising costs to complete the Woldstad's upgrades have forced DPS to re-evaluate our future vessel needs to meet our important mission of protecting the people of Alaska and its valuable wildlife resources. Clearly, the P/V Stimson is much better suited to continue to patrol the high seas and operate in the Bering Seas harsh conditions. There is no comparison between the two vessel's capabilities when dealing with weather encountered in that region of the State. The Stimson is unmistakably the best vessel for that mission. With the continued growth of our in-shore fisheries, between recreational fisheries, sport fish charter fleets and lodges, subsistence fisheries, commercial fisheries, and search and rescues, a need for a smaller more efficient vessel would be better suited for our overall future mission needs. We believe a 58' class; commercial seiner type vessel would better meet our enforcement needs for many years to come. It is large enough to participate in Bristol Bay and efficient enough to safely patrol our in-shore areas of Kodiak, Alaska Peninsula, Lower Kenai Peninsula and Upper Cook Inlet.

Our overall plan is to decommission the Woldstad after the 2014 Bristol Bay Program. Already this FY, we have incurred approximately \$130k of unanticipated costs associated with keeping the Woldstad operational. DPS cannot continue to absorb these costs within our existing budget without it negatively impacting our other patrol vessels. To continue to postpone the much needed work for the Woldstad will only increase the possibility of a major component failure while underway; this could jeopardize the crew or vessel and have a responsibility to safeguard both. Once the vessel is put out of service our desire is to sell it and seek legislative approval to use the existing funding, plus the proceeds of the sale of the vessel in order to purchase a new patrol vessel. At the same time we are seeking to relocate the P/V Stimson from Dutch Harbor to Kodiak to consolidate our fleet. Other than cost savings there are many benefits of making this move which should have been accomplished several years ago. Once the personnel and Stimson is relocated to Kodiak we estimate a yearly cost savings of \$500k.

Representative Tammie Wilson  
January 6, 2014  
Page Three

Here are some current cost comparisons:

- Fuel Usage Per hour: P/V Stimson 56 gals, P/V Woldstad 56 gals
- P/V Stimson Daily Rate Dutch Harbor (\$10,400) crew of five
- P/V Stimson Daily Rate Kodiak (est. \$8,000) crew of five
- P/V Woldstad Daily Rate Kodiak (\$7,780) crew of four
- P/V Stimson Cruising Speed 9 knots
- P/V Woldstad Cruising Speed 10 knots
- P/V Woldstad Three Year Average Sea Days Per FY: 100
- P/V Stimson Three Year Average Sea Days Per FY: 116
- FY14 Usage to Date Woldstad Sea Days: 49
- FY14 Usage to Date Stimson Sea Days: 58

DPS recognizes the need to have a presence in the Bering Sea and Gulf of Alaska and will continue to do so with the P/V Stimson. With the potential of reduced funding because of forecasted declining revenues we believe that consolidating our fleet in Kodiak, replacing the P/V Woldstad with a smaller and more efficient vessel helps meet our obligation to be a good steward of the people's resources and money.

Senator Kelly, I know the decommissioning of the Woldstad is very concerning to the Woldstad family. I truly understand this concern as I have worked with Ken Woldstad during my career. His father, Fred Woldstad set a high standard for this Division that I believe we still adhere too. This move is not any way intended to discredit Colonel Woldstad's contribution to this Division or DPS. When I talked to Bonne Woldstad, I offered to name the new vessel after Colonel Woldstad and I am hopeful if this occurs the family will take me up on my offer. If you feel the need for further explanation I would be more than willing to meet with you personally.

Sincerely,



Colonel James E. Cockrell  
Director Alaska Wildlife Troopers  
Acting Director Alaska State Troopers

Cc: Acting Commissioner Keith Mallard  
Deputy Commissioner Terry Vrabec  
Legislative Liaison Kelly Howell  
Director of Finance Dan Spencer