

Representative Alan Austerman

Alaska State Legislature



Session:

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801
(907) 465-2487 | (800) 865-2487
(907) 465-4956 (fax)

Interim:

305 Center Ave, Suite 1
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907) 486-8872
(907) 486-5264 (fax)

Sponsor Statement – House Joint Resolution 13

Urging the United States Congress and the President of the United States to complete the funding and acquisition of three additional National Security Cutters and to home port one of the cutters in Kodiak, Alaska.

The National Security Cutter (NSC) is a 'Legend-class' centerpiece of the Coast Guard's fleet. These vessels are paramount to supporting maritime homeland security and defense missions. They have the largest and most technologically advanced features including a large flight deck; state-of-the-art command and control equipment to enhance interoperability; detection and defense capabilities against chemical, biological or radiological attack; and advanced sensors to contribute to intelligence.

"With their unmatched combination of range, speed and ability to operate in extreme weather conditions, the case for the National Security Cutter is simple – we are a safer and more secure nation when they are patrolling the high seas."

Rear Admiral John Korn, U.S. Coast Guard Assistant
Commandant for Acquisition.

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has completed the acquisition of five NSC vessels, three of which are in service: the Bertholf, Weasche and Stratton are home ported at Alameda, CA. A fourth NSC vessel is under construction and the contract for the fifth has been awarded. The budget request for a sixth NSC vessel lies in the balance at the federal level.

We must see forward progress on the Coast Guard's production schedule to complete funding, acquisition and delivery of the full fleet of eight NSC ships with at least one dedicated to be home ported in Kodiak.

This Resolution also recognizes that it is essential that the federal government begin planning to establish a Coast Guard base in the Arctic as well as move forward on the NSC Cutters as an interim measure for search and rescue, oil spill response preparedness, and patrolling the region – closer to future shipping, oil and gas drilling, and commercial fishing activities. Currently, Kodiak is the closest Coast Guard base to Arctic waters which is more than 1,000 miles from the Chukchi Sea.

This Resolution emphasizes Alaska's support for increasing the nation's maritime strength and presence by completing the acquisition of three additional National Security Cutters and homeporting one vessel in Kodiak.