

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

March 17, 2022

1:34 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator Robert Myers, Chair
Senator Mike Shower, Vice Chair
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Jesse Kiehl

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator Click Bishop

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 170

"An Act relating to the Alaska marine highway system; establishing the Alaska Marine Highway Corporation; and providing for an effective date."

- HEARD & HELD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 170

SHORT TITLE: MARINE HIGHWAY CORPORATION

SPONSOR(S): TRANSPORTATION

01/21/22	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/21/22	(S)	TRA, L&C, FIN
02/17/22	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/17/22	(S)	Heard & Held
02/17/22	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
02/22/22	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/22/22	(S)	Heard & Held
02/22/22	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
03/17/22	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

WITNESS REGISTER

THERESA WOLSTAD, Staff
Senator Robert Myers

Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of the Alaska Marine Highway Corporation in SB 170 on behalf of the committee.

SHANNON ADAMSON, Regional Representative
Masters, Mates and Pilots Union (MMP)

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint on Alaska Marine Highway MMP crew during the discussion of SB 170.

BEN GOLDRICH, Representative
Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint on the Alaska Marine MEBA crew during the discussion of SB 170.

EARLING WALLI, Regional Director
Inland Boatmen's Union of the Pacific (IBU)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Co-presented a PowerPoint on the Alaska Marine Highway System IBU crew during the discussion of SB 170.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:34:36 PM](#)

CHAIR ROBERT MYERS called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:34 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Kiehl, Shower, and Chair Myers. Senator Micciche arrived shortly thereafter.

SB 170-MARINE HIGHWAY CORPORATION

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CHAIR MYERS announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 170 "An Act relating to the Alaska marine highway system; establishing the Alaska Marine Highway Corporation; and providing for an effective date."

[1:36:10 PM](#)

THERESA WOLSTAD, Staff, Senator Robert Myers, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, on behalf of the committee, stated that today's hearing would focus on the Alaska Marine Highway System labor and unions. She summarized the proposed AMHC's authority regarding labor negotiations and employment.

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SENATOR MICCICHE joined the meeting.

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MS. WOLSTAD paraphrased written comments.

[Original punctuation provided.]

AMHC Employees

Employees of the proposed corporation in SB 170 will be employees of the corporation and not of the state. Employees shall be treated as state employees for purposes of "Chapter 40. Labor Organizations" (AS 23.40) and "Title 39. Public Officers and Employees" (AS 39). Unless otherwise provided in a mutual agreed collective bargaining agreement, employees will continue to be covered by the Alaska Wage and Hour Act. The corporation has the authority to hire and discharge employees and determine the hours of employment, compensation and fringe benefits, and the personnel policies affecting the working conditions of employees, except for general policies describing the function and purposes of an employer.

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Brief overview of AMH Corporation Collective Bargaining Agreement.

Under the proposed legislation, the corporation or an authorized representative of the corporation may negotiate and enter into collective bargaining agreements with the employees of the corporation engaged in operating the marine highway system as masters or members of the crews of vessels or other employees of the corporation or their bargaining agent. The Corporation may make provisions in the collective bargaining agreement for the settlement of labor disputes by arbitration.

The Alaska Labor Relations Agency will serve at the request of the AMH corporation as the labor relations agency (Section 5). Board has the authority to appoint executive officers and agents of the corporation. The board can delegate powers and duties necessary for management of daily affairs and operation of the corporation to chief executive officer. This allows the corporation flexibility regarding negotiation of collective bargaining agreements. A collective bargaining agreement is not

final without the concurrence of the board of directors of the corporation. In addition, specific board approval is required to enter into labor agreements or service contracts exceeding \$250,000 a year (Article 2. Page 12-13).

Comparison of Railroad and AMH

Employees of the Alaska Railroad are employees of the corporation and not of the state. However, employees of the railroad corporation shall be treated as employees of the state for the purposes of the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act. The Public Employment Relations Act does not apply to the Alaska Railroad corporation or to its employees (AS 42.40.720). However, employees who are not executive officers may organize and form, join, or assist and an organization to engage in collective bargaining.

Employees of the Alaska Railroad are covered in the Alaska Wage and Hour Act. If the terms of a collective bargaining agreement that was mutually agreed upon by an organization representing train or engine service employees and the corporation so provide.

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CHAIR MYERS turned to a PowerPoint by the AMHS Maritime Unions.

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BEN GOLDRICH, representative, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association (MEBA), Juneau, Alaska, introduced himself.

[1:40:06 PM](#)

EARLING WALLI, Regional Director, Inland Boatmen's Union (IBU) of the Pacific, Juneau, Alaska, introduced himself.

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SHANNON ADAMSON, Regional Representative, Masters, Mates and Pilots Union (MMP) began a PowerPoint on the Inland Boatman's Union (IBU), Marine Engineers' Beneficial Association (MEBA), Masters, Mates and Pilots (MMP). She reviewed slide 2, Who We Are and What We Do.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Inland Boatman's Union (IBU) - Represents all unlicensed crew

- Stewards, Pursers, and all unlicensed Deck and Engine Crew
- Marine Engineer's Beneficial Association (MEBA) - Represents all Licensed Engine Crew
- Masters, Mates and Pilots (MMP) - Represents all Licensed Deck Crew

MS. ADAMSON identified the three unions that represent all unlicensed and licensed crew that work on the AMHS, IBU, MEBA, and MMP. She explained that stewards provide customer service by maintaining passenger amenities, provisions and supplies, food and beverage service, and stateroom service. In general, stewards take care of passenger and crew, including emergency duties as required. Pursers provide customer service related to ticketing, financial transactions, crew, and passenger information services. The purser is the designated medical person on board and assists during emergencies. The unlicensed deck and engine crew maintains all equipment on board, including the engines, keeps the vessel running and performs emergency duties as required. The deck crew loads, unloads, ties up, and unties the vessels. The crew conducts some watch standings, provides deck side maintenance, and performs emergency duties as assigned.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed the second bullet point on slide 2. She explained that MEBA provides the licensed crew on board the vessels. These licensed crew start up and shut down the vessel's engines, perform oil transfers, and maintain and repair all machinery including generators, sewage tanks, main engines, and bow thrusters. She characterized their duties as encompassing anything from bow to stern that has machinery or plugs in.

MS. ADAMSON reviewed the final bullet point on slide 2. She explained that MMP represents all of the licensed deck crew on board. MMP provide navigation during loading and unloading of the vessels to ensure stability, monitor and maintain lifesaving and navigational equipment, maintain vessel security, handle deck side, car deck, and passenger issues, emergency coordination, and other emergency duties as required. MMP also represents the captains in charge of and overseeing the entire vessel.

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MS. ADAMSON explained the difference between licensed and unlicensed crew in that unlicensed crew have less US Coast Guard (USCG) testing requirements. Licensed crew have substantially more US Coast Guard testing and therefore have greater responsibilities and liability.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 3, which listed the Full Time Entry Level Minimum qualifications, noting that a steward earns approximately \$18-\$22 per hour and is typically the entry-level position for unlicensed workers.

[Original punctuation provided.]

Full Time Entry Level Minimum Qualifications
Steward - Approx. \$18 - \$22 Per Hour

- Merchant Mariner Credential with endorsements including
- Steward /Food Handler
- Basic Safety Training
- USCG Medical Certificate
- Transportation Worker Identification Card
- Alcohol Server Card or TAPS
- Vessel Specific Training and Certifications
- Passenger RO/RO Certification
- Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO)/Preventing Sexual Harassment Certificate or Respectful Workplace State of Alaska Food Worker Card
- Basic HCT Curriculum
- Maritime Security Awareness on-line course Security 101 course may be substituted
- Marine Evacuation System Certification
- Pre-employment Drug Test
- 1008 hours (approximately 6 months) experience in the Stewards Department with AMHS
- Two AMHS performance evaluations, one of which must be within the past 6 months, by two different Chief Stewards which indicate high acceptable performance level or higher to be considered permanent
- For LeConte and Aurora, Stewards must have minimum of intermediate skill level using computerized Point of Sale Systems

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MS. ADAMSON emphasized that possessing these qualifications does not guarantee year round work. She stated that some of the qualifications require US Coast Guard (USCG) training, including classroom, pool, and firefighting exercises. Unlicensed crew must also be subject to a federal background check and demonstrate the ability to use a marine evacuation slide. She explained that applicants must acquire these qualifications. She stated that the unions have suggested the department establish a training fund for new hires to assist them in obtaining the necessary qualifications.

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SENATOR SHOWER asked for the funding source for the proposed training fund and if the unions or legislature would establish it.

MS. ADAMSON answered that the unions recommended that DOTPF establish a training fund but require a time commitment, so the investment would not be lost if the employee left. She stated MMP expressed an interest in further discussing the fund but has not yet received a response.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 4, Full Time Entry Level Minimum Qualifications. She explained that she did a job search on Workplace Alaska and found that an Office Assistant 1 earns approximately \$17 per hour and requires a high school diploma or equivalent. She concluded that the many requirements for entry level AMHS jobs compare to entry level state jobs may explain why AMHS has difficulty hiring unlicensed crew.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 5, Full Time Deck and Engine Department Additional Minimum Qualifications, which read:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Watchman

- Merchant Mariner Credential with endorsements
- Ordinary Seaman
- Lifeboatman (PSC)
- Proficiency in the Use of Survival Craft
- Security Awareness
- Crowd Management
- Hazmat Basic
- Maritime Security Awareness on-line course

- Security 101 and VSO 201 courses may be substituted
- Two performance evaluations by two different Supervisors which indicate high acceptable performance level or higher

Wiper

- Merchant Mariner Credential with endorsements
- Wiper
- Lifeboatman (PSC)
- Proficiency in the Use of Survival Craft
- Security Awareness
- Crowd Management
- Hazmat Basic
- Maritime Security Awareness on-line course
- Security 101 and VSO 201 courses may be substituted
- Two performance evaluations by two different Supervisors which indicate high acceptable performance level or higher

MS. ADAMSON said slide 5 builds on the entry level steward positions shown on slide 3. A person must acquire additional qualifications to get hired in deck or engine departments or advance in the Steward or Purser departments.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 6, Additional Requirements for Unlicensed Supervisors.

[Original punctuation provided.]

Additional Requirements for Unlicensed Supervisors

Chief Steward

- Merchant Mariner Credential with endorsements
 - Lifeboatman (PSC)
 - Proficiency in the Use of Survival Craft
 - Security Awareness
 - Crowd Management
- AMHS Requirements
 - Current Alcohol Manager
 - Supervisors HCT
 - Academy for Supervisors
 - Marine Evacuation Slide Certification

Boatswain

- Merchant Mariner Credential with endorsements
 - Able-Bodied Seaman Unlimited
 - Lifeboatman (PSC)
 - Rating Forming Part of a Navigational Watch
 - Proficiency in the Use of Survival Craft
 - Fact Rescue Boat
 - Vessel Personnel Having Designated Security Duties
 - Crowd Management
 - Advanced Firefighting Certification

- AMHS Requirements
 - Forklift Compliance
 - Supervisors HCT
 - Hazmat Basic
 - Marine Evacuation Slide Certification

MS. ADAMSON explained that these positions require additional USCG certifications and sometimes additional testing compared to other job classes.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 7, MEBA Minimum Qualifications.

[Original punctuation provided.]

MEBA Minimum Qualifications

- Coast Guard License for specific Job Class
- Officer in Charge of an Engineering Watch Certification
- Rating For Performing Part of an Engineering Watch
- STCW - 95
- Lifeboatman Certification
- Survival Craft and Rescue Boats
- Medical First Aid Provider
- Advanced Firefighting
- Basic Safety Training
 - Firefighting, Personal Survival Techniques, Personal Safety and Social Responsibility and First Aid

- Engine Room Resource Management
- Multiple Hazardous Communication Training Modules
- Management of Electrical and Electronic Control Equipment
- Vessel Personnel with Designated Security Duties
- Vessel Security Officer(Security 101 and VSO201)
- Hazardous Materials Basic Training
- Transportation Worker Identity Card (Federal)
- USCG Medical Certificate
- Equal Opportunity Employment Certificate
- Marine Evacuation Slide Certificate
- Vessel Specific Familiarization
- 2 positive Letters of Recommendation, and Evaluations

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MS. ADAMSON stated that this transitions from the unlicensed department to the licensed department. These qualifications represent the entry-level qualifications for a permanent engineer, which is a 3rd assistant engineer. She noted that every crewmember must have some qualifications. She provided examples of the additional qualifications to meet the minimum qualifications for licensed MEBA engineers, including an officer in charge of an engineering watch certification, management of electrical and electronic control equipment, and engine room resource management. She emphasized that AMHS does not assist applicants in obtaining the necessary qualifications for these entry-level engineering jobs.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 8, MMP minimum qualifications.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- MMP Minimum Qualifications
- Coast Guard Required License for Specific Job Class
- RADAR/ARPA Certifications
- Basic Safety Training
 - Firefighting, Personal Survival Techniques, Personal Safety and Social Responsibility and First Aid
- Bridge Resource Management
- Flashing Light / Morse Code
- Advanced Fire Fighting Techniques

- Vessel Security Officer Training (Security 101 and VSO 201)
- Crowd and Crisis Management
- Fast Rescue Boat Certification
- Transportation Worker Identity Card (Federal background check required)
- Multiple Hazardous Communication Training Modules
- STCW - 95
- Equal Opportunity Employment Certificate
- FCC Element 1 - Marine Operators License
- FCC Element 7 - GMDSS License
- Medical Person In Charge Certification
- Lifeboatman Certification
- Officer in Charge of a Navigational Watch Certification
- Hazmat Basic Training
- Forklift Compliance HCT
- ECDIS (Electronic Chart Display and Information System)

- Marine Evacuation Slide Certificate
- Vessel Specific Familiarization
- Forklift Compliance
- Federal First-Class Pilotage
 - Southeast Alaska
 - Southwest Alaska (including the Aleutian Chain)
 - Prince William Sound
 - Washington State
- 2 positive Letters of Recommendation, and Evaluations

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MS. ADAMSON explained slide 8 provides a list of entry-level qualifications for a permanent full-time Third Mate position for Masters, Mates, and Pilots. Some requirements are similar and others include RADAR or flashing light, Morse code, or Global Maritime Distress Signaling System (GMDSS).

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MS. ADAMSON stated that she received a degree in marine transportation from the California Maritime Academy and a Third Mate's unlimited license. She said those qualifications helped her get hired at AMHS, but it did not guarantee her a permanent full-time position or year-round work. However, she had acquired

many necessary certifications because she graduated from a maritime academy. Those applicants who do not graduate from a maritime academy must obtain and pay for the certifications independently.

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CHAIR MYERS stated that he recognized some of the certifications because his trucking profession requires certification. He acknowledged that AMHS does not assist with the certifications. He asked whether AMHS helps employees obtain recertifications if needed.

MS. ADAMSON answered yes. She said sometimes AMHS sponsors classes and also contributes towards an MMP training program run by the union.

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MR.WALLI agreed that AMHS provides training, such as basic training, firefighting, and fast rescue boat certification.

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MR. GOLDRICH added that MEBA also has its own engineering school in eastern Maryland.

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MS. ADAMSON turned to slide 9, MMP Pilotage.

[Original punctuation provided.]

MMP Pilotage

- Southeast Alaska Pilotage
 - 20 primary pilotage areas
 - 7 secondary areas
- Prince William Sound
 - 3 primary areas
 - 4 secondary areas
- Southwest Alaska Pilotage
 - 5 primary areas
 - 7 secondary
- Washington State Pilotage
 - 3 pilotage areas

- Total Pilotage Areas = 49

MS. ADAMSON played a short video that showed the AMHS pilotage areas. She explained that the USCG requires federal pilotage in order to navigate a vessel over 1600 tons in restricted waters.

MS. ADAMSON noted all but three AMHS vessels are over 1600 tons. She indicated that to obtain pilotage, an MMP must do 8-12 observer trips through each area. Some areas are less frequented, such as Dutch Harbor. She described other requirements, including drawing charts, written exams covering local knowledge of channels, depths, aids to navigation, tides and currents, weather conditions, traffic considerations, and anchorages. For example, it took her four years to acquire enough pilotage and meet the requirements for a full-time, year round 3rd mate position. She stated that Washington state ferries require MMPs to draw 8-10 charts and it takes one to two days to meet the trip requirements.

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SENATOR KIEHL asked what level of discretion AMHS has over the minimum requirements.

MS. ADAMSON responded that the United States Coast Guard (USCG) sets most of the requirements. AMHS requires pilotage for the three vessels under 1600 tons.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 10, Additional Requirements for Chief Engineers and Masters.

Chief Engineers

- Merchant Mariner Credential with endorsements
 - Chief Engineers Motor Propelled vessel (any HP)
 - Requires multiple Coast Guard tests to advance to this level with seatime requirements with each advancement
- Leadership and Managerial Skills Assessment
 - AMHS Requirements
 - Academy for Supervisors Certification
 - Forklift Compliance
 - Supervisors HCT Curriculum
 - BioSystem Multi-Gas Meter Qualification

Masters

- Merchant Mariner Credential with endorsements
 - Master Unlimited Oceans or Inland AGT License
 - Requires multiple Coast Guard tests to advance to this level with seatime requirements with each advancement Leadership and Managerial Skills Assessment
- AMHS Requirements
 - Academy for Supervisors Certification
 - Supervisors HCT Curriculum
- Pilotage (a few examples)
 - Matanuska and Columbia:
 - SE Primary, SE Secondary & Washington = 30 areas
 - Tustumena:
 - SW Primary, SW Secondary, PWS Primary & PWS Secondary = 19 areas
 - Kennicott:
 - SE Primary, SE Secondary, SE Other, SE Western, PWS Primary, PWS Secondary & SW Primary = 49 areas

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MS. ADAMSON stated that these qualifications are in addition to the ones on the prior slide. She emphasized that it takes numerous USCG tests and years of sea time to advance to these levels.

MS. ADAMSON emphasized that these positions cannot be filled by someone off the street, so it takes financial investment and training to become a steward, and years to advance to engineers and masters. She stated that the licensed mariners need additional training in classrooms and on ships or a degree from a maritime academy to achieve these qualifications. Thus, qualified mariners are an investment. DOTPF has testified to retention issues. She said these mariners are sought after and the state loses its investments.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 11, Licensed Bids vs. Vacancies.

[Original punctuation provided.]

MMP Bids vs Vacancies

- Total Member - 78
 - Number of positions 75
- Captains - 17
 - Number of positions - 18
- Chief Mates -18
 - Vacancies - 1
 - Number of positions 16
- 2nd Mates - 15
 - Vacancies-2
 - Number of positions 17
- 3rd Mates - 28
- Losing an additional 4-6 high level deck officers this summer
 - 13 in 4 years

MEBA Bids vs Vacancies

- Total Members - 58
 - Number of positions - 73
- Chief Engineers - 20
 - Vacancies - 1
 - Number of positions - 21
- 1st Ast. Engineers - 12
 - Vacancies - 4
 - Number of positions -16
- 2nd Ast. Engineers - 11
 - Vacancies - 3
 - Number of positions -16
- 3rd Ast. Engineers - 11
 - Vacancies - 7
 - Number of positions -18
- No crew currently assigned to Hubbard

MS. ADAMSON explained that slide 11 shows the full-time positions compared to vacancies for licensed mariners. She recalled DOTPF indicated that it would like to run the Tazlina and Columbia this summer but it would need 112 licensed MMP mariners and 80 MEBA mariners to do so. This slide shows AMHS is seriously understaffed and would not likely be able to run the vessels. Further, once the Hubbard comes out of Vigor Shipyards, it would need six MMP and six MEBA crew to run the vessel.

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MS. ADAMSON deferred to Mr. Walli to review IBU vacancies.

MR. WALLI reviewed slide 12, IBU vacancies, which consisted of pie charts showing the total members and vacancies. He noted that the yellow portion of each pie chart refers to the vacant positions for each department. He stated that there are 26 bids in the Purser's department with 13 vacancies. The Engine department has 60 bids and 41 vacancies, and the Steward department has 164 bids and 126 vacancies, or 57 percent versus 43 percent. There are 164 bids and 126 vacancies. The Deck department has 96 bids versus 29 vacancies for a total of 311 bid-workers and 130 non-bid vacancies. He noted that the yellow portion of each pie chart refers to the vacant positions for each department.

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MS. ADAMSON highlighted that the data on the slide referred to positions without running the Columbia, Tazlina, or the Hubbard.

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SENATOR SHOWER asked if the total meant 311 plus 130 for a total of total 440 positions.

MR. WALLI answered yes.

SENATOR SHOWER asked what the terms bid and not bid mean.

MR. WALLI stated that 130 positions are vacant bids, which are jobs not being filled.

SENATOR SHOWER related his understanding that no one was available for those 130 positions.

MR. WALLI responded that people work on the vessels and fill the vacant bids as relief or seasonal workers, so they are not regularly-assigned employees.

SENATOR SHOWER asked how AMHS categorizes its employees, such as seasonal, non-union or union.

MR. WALLI stated that a seasonal crewmember has earned less than 30 points. He explained that crewmembers earn a point per month or one point per 84 hours. Thus, a crewmember with over 2.5 years becomes a relief. The seasonal and relief crewmembers fill the AMHS vacancies. These positions are biddable, but some

crewmembers like the flexibility of not having to do the job but filling the position as a relief crewmember.

SENATOR SHOWER asked whether they were union or non-union members.

MR. WALLI stated that after a 2019 US Supreme Court decision [Janus v. State, County, and Municipal employees], public sector employees do not have to join, but most are union members.

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SENATOR SHOWER acknowledged that it was complicated.

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SENATOR KIEHL asked if AMHS can fill vacancies. Suppose the legislature appropriated funds, how many vacant positions could be filled with qualified employees.

MR. WALLI responded that most of the jobs would be filled for year-round work.

SENATOR KIEHL asked how many Alaskans AMHS would hire versus out-of-state workers.

MS. ADAMSON asked whether his question was how many current employees would be able to fill the positions or how many people AMHS would need to hire.

SENATOR KIEHL expressed his interest in knowing how many Alaskans could be hired to fill the positions.

MR. WALLI said he was unsure. He offered his view that 130 positions would be filled by Alaskans who currently work for the system and want year-round work. He stated that IBU has been actively recruiting mariners from all over the US, but Lower 48 workers face pay discrepancies and must pay their transportation to and from Alaska.

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CHAIR MYERS asked if AMHS had to steal personnel from other employers, could it achieve full staff or would it be necessary to bring people in from out-of-state.

MR. WALLI responded that he was unsure.

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SENATOR SHOWER related his understanding that it would take money to fill the 130 vacant positions. He stated that personnel costs for AMHS represents 75 percent of the total AMHS funding. He characterized it as a balance between running empty boats running on a schedule and reducing AMHS's schedule. He expressed concern that AMHS runs partially full vessels, but that is not how it should work. He pointed out that FedEx doesn't fly 747s to Hoonah due to a lack of business. He wondered if the focus should be on running the ferry system that is efficient. He argued against the state appropriating funds instead of figuring out the actual needs.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 13, 2015 to 2022 Retention Trend, which consisted of line graphs showing the MMP, MEBA, and IBU retention. She emphasized that when the trend began in 2015, the union representatives recognized that it could be problematic and advised the legislature

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SENATOR SHOWER asked why people are leaving AMHS. He related his experience at FedEx, such that retirement rates for pilots doubled because they no longer wanted to fly due to COVID-19.

MS. ADAMSON stated a later slide would discuss retirement.

[2:07:07 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 14, Why Do Mariners Work for AMHS?

[Original punctuation provided.]

- The Schedule - Southeast
 - The 2 week on and 2 week off or 1 week on and 1 week off schedule
 - 12 hours/day, 14 days/month=168 hours/month
 - Average 42 hours per week as compared to a regular 40 hour work week
- The Schedule - Southwest
 - Flexibility and the ability to take longer periods of time off
- Predictable working schedule that is printed 3-4 times per year for licensed crew and bi-monthly for unlicensed crew
 - Rare in the maritime industry, with the required qualifications, to have this schedule

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MR. GOLDRICH explained that a number of vessels work a month on and a month off, or 28-day rotations, which is attractive to many because it cuts down on their travel costs. However, if they don't get relieved on time, they work three months straight, which is tough on families. He explained that the system doesn't have enough relief staff, which increases the personnel decline. Since the flexible schedules attracted them to AMHS, not the pay, once the schedules are no longer attractive, they leave.

MR. WALLI stated that the Southwest unlicensed is a one-crew system. Southeast Alaska has two crews, an "A" crew and a "B" crew. They work from 6 to 10 weeks on either the Tustumena or the Aurora before they take 4 to 8 weeks off, which is a little different than MEBA.

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MS. ADAMSON added that the schedules provide predictability for crews.

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SENATOR SHOWER said he was struck by the parallels between the aviation and marine industries. He asked if AMHS's workers must commute.

MS. ADAMSON answered that the vast majority live where they pick up the vessel, otherwise they pay their own way. AMHS would cover travel costs if they decide to relocate the crewmember.

SENATOR SHOWER asked whether the 168 hours relates to the hours on the ship.

MS. ADAMSON answered yes; the 168 hours represents the time on watch or on duty.

SENATOR SHOWER stated that his pay at FedEx typically is 80 hours a month, but he is away from home much longer.

MS. ADAMSON confirmed that it was 12-hour days and starts when the crewmember arrives on the vessel or when they go on watch.

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MS. ADAMSON emphasized that the schedules are not predictable due to manning shortages, increases in call back, and hold over that Mr. Goldrich mentioned.

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MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 15, Why are They Leaving?

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Scheduling issues
 - Increased Work Schedules in the form of Holdovers and Call Backs
 - Members end up working a 350 hours per month and still have 144 hours to go before being relieved
- Untimely vacation approvals
- Lack of year round work
 - Invest in employees
 - Work constantly in the summer and are not utilized in winter
 - Crew members seek other employment in the winter and do not return in the summers
- Payroll Issues
- Sleep Schedule
- Wages aren't keeping up with inflation
- Lack of communication and respect - Low Morale
 - They feel their input and opinions are not valued or listened to

MS. ADAMSON explained that when crew are held over for two weeks, they work the two weeks that would have been time off at an overtime rate, then they must work their next regular two-week period for a total of six weeks. This means staff have now worked 504 hours without a day off or 350 hours in one month and face working another 144 hours before leaving the vessel. Despite the overtime, most members dislike being held over and would rather spend the time with their families.

MS. ADAMSON referred to untimely vacation approvals for IBU members. She explained that IBU members were having issues getting time off. She stated that all three unions, specifically IBU members, work during the summer and have winters off. She offered her view that if members had year-round work, it would lead to better retention rates. She stated that the current schedule for most watch-standing crewmembers is six hours on and six hours off rotation, prior to accounting for any daily overtime. She said very few shipping companies operate with this schedule because it is proven to have negative health impacts.

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MS. ADAMSON stated that MMP and IBU had a six percent wage increase over the last 10 years. She stated that MEBA had not had a wage increase since 2017. The Department of Labor's website for urban Alaska inflation shows an increase of 16 percent.

MS. ADAMSON turned to low morale. She stated that one issue had been a lack of communication between the fleet and the office. AMHS has begun holding bi-monthly meetings due to COVID-19.

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CHAIR MYERS stated that some people elect to only work seasonally, during the 3 to 4 summer months. He asked whether AMHS has any difficulties finding staff to work seasonally.

MS. ADAMSON stated that there are no guarantees that just because someone prefers seasonal work, they will be able to achieve it. Again, the current situation creates unpredictability.

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MR. WALLI agreed that the lack of year-round work for most members is problematic. Further, the crew has unpredictable schedules, so if they are laid off in the winter, they find other work and do not return, which is the crux of the issue.

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SENATOR SHOWER asked what solutions the unions and AMHS have considered so crew have work but the vessels are run based on the level of ridership.

MR. WALLI responded that when a vessel goes into layup, AMHS retains one crew to work in either the Portland or Ketchikan shipyard. He suggested they could alleviate it by having two crews, each working two weeks on and two weeks off to provide consistent work. However, he also acknowledged that during federal capital improvement programs (CIP) everyone will be pulled off the vessels. While it is not a perfect solution, it would mean that members would get longer hours.

2:20:44 PM

SENATOR SHOWER asked whether members were receptive to the proposal.

MR. WALLI stated that IBU currently is in the process of collective bargaining discussions, so he did not wish to comment.

SENATOR SHOWER referred to the sleep schedule, which was also a big issue in the airline industry. He asked whether the unions have suggested changes. He offered his belief that policy could address this issue. He asked what was blocking resolution.

MS. ADAMSON stated that MMP had offered numerous suggestions to remedy this in the past. She said that ten years ago, MMP added language to its contract to allow the crew to work on an 8-hour day, but the USCG, not MMP, determines the schedule.

[2:21:53 PM](#)

CHAIR MYERS asked whether the change ports were the same as the yard locations.

MS. ADAMSON responded that Southwest vessels go to the Seward yard, which is not a change port. However, in Southeast Alaska, Ketchikan has the yard and is a change port.

CHAIR MYERS wondered if that could make transferring people to the yard easier.

MS. ADAMSON related that the LeConte is a Juneau-based boat, and the crew lives in Juneau. When the LeConte goes into layup in Ketchikan, the crew is paid to travel to the yard.

[2:22:55 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON turned to slide 17, Where are They Going?

[Original punctuation provided.]

- MEBA Union Hall Postings
 - Engineer jobs are going unfilled due to AMHS' reputation
 - These Officers are choosing other posting due to payroll issues and holdovers among other things
- For MMP - Pilots Associations (SEAPA, SWPA and AMP)
- Since a majority of pilotage is already required by AMHS, the transition to the Pilots' Associations is relatively easier
- The licensure is comparable
- Pilot positions are significantly more lucrative

MS. ADAMSON deferred to Mr. Goldrich to cover MEBA. She explained that MEBA is the only union that uses the hiring hall. MMP and MEBA members can sail the offshore routes and make more money, but their time off is in large chunks. The crew has no say in the specific run, but AMHS members are willing to do so because it provides job security.

[2:24:19 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated that many state departments face hiring retention issues. He referred to slide 15 and asked whether the unions have a formal process or if it is anecdotal. He wondered about the source of information for slides 15-17.

MS. ADAMSON agreed that anecdotal information was told to the union representative when they departed. AMHS and DOTPF have an exit packet that does not contain a survey.

SENATOR MICCICHE remarked that it would be helpful.

[2:25:49 PM](#)

MR. GOLDRICH stated that MEBA has a hiring hall. He said AMHS could not operate without it because it allows them to use fewer permanent engineers. He related that the jobs were more difficult to fill. He said a Seattle branch agent stated that if he had five Washington State ferry jobs posted and five AMHS jobs, Washington state would fill theirs first, which is a change from prior times.

[2:26:40 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER offered his view that the nationwide trend was the same for airline pilots, truckers, marine pilots, or electricians. He asked whether part of the issue was related to scale since Seattle and Bellingham serve a much larger population.

MR. GOLDRICH responded that MEBA's Seattle labor hall is the busiest shipping hall nationwide.

MS. ADAMSON added that the state does not produce enough mariners to fill positions. She pointed out that Washington state currently has a huge shortage, that the union school is inundated with people trying to get their certifications to sail since the mariner industry is a desirable career. The problem is that the demand is higher than the number of people available to meet it.

[2:28:30 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER referred to a Veterans' organization, VIPER Transitions, which assists veterans. Alaska has the highest per capita veteran population in the nation. This organization assists unemployed veterans, in part, as a method of reducing veteran suicide. He offered his view that many veterans would like to stay in Alaska and would like the AMHS jobs.

[2:29:09 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON acknowledged that MMP Headquarters has some involvement with VIPER Transitions.

[2:29:17 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked whether seasonality was an ongoing issue. He related that Washington State Ferries and the Black Ball Ferry Line run continuously. However, Alaska cannot partner with communities south of the equator. He asked for a comparison of seasonality in other ferry systems.

MR. WALLI related that high school and college students used to work on AMHS in the summer. He stated one way to revitalize the workforce is to get young people involved at job fairs.

[2:30:44 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE characterized seasonality as a challenge, not as a benefit. He stated that getting young people to come to Alaska for fish processing is also a challenge.

MR. WALLI stated that the Washington state ferries run year round.

MS. ADAMSON stated that seasonality was not a problem for MMP, but it presents issues for IBU.

[2:31:44 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON turned to the next section on slide 17, Pilots Association (SEPA, SWPA, and AMP).

MS. ADAMSON said that the Southeast Alaska Pilot's Association, the Southwest Pilot's Association, and the Alaska Marine Pilots are experiencing significant retirements, so job openings are abundant. She characterized AMHS as a cradle for these positions because AMHS pilotage licensure is similar. She said that most of the base pilotage was the same. She highlighted that the Alaska Marine Pilots earn nearly four times the salary of AMHS captains. The positions are seasonal, but pilots work consistently for six months and then have six months off. Although AMHS employees have gravitated to the marine pilots,

since the marine pilots have had large openings, this year 4-6 MMP members will leave AMHS. She anticipated an additional 14 would go in the next four years. She stated that AMHS has been hiring third mates but losing captains.

SENATOR SHOWER asked for the career progression for captains.

MS. ADAMSON responded that it would depend on whether the person has an ocean or inland license, but it typically would take 10-15 years.

[2:33:44 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON noted she had skipped slide 16, Where are They Going?

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Retirements
- Other companies such as Washington State Ferries, Black Ball, west coast tugging companies and offshore companies
- More lucrative positions are available
- More reliable time off
- Holdover has become an issue
- Increased job security

[2:34:13 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 18, Washington State and Black Ball Ferry Wage Comparison. The information in the four boxes on the slide read:

[Original punctuation provided.]

- WSF Masters make on average 23% more than AMHS
 - In the highest category - 33% more
- WSF Chief Mates - 27% more
- WSF 2nd Mates - 14% more

- WSF Chief Engineers on average make 35% more than AMHS
 - In the highest category - 53%
 - Will receive an additional 3.25% pay increase on July 1, 2022

- Black Ball Masters make on average 41% more than AMHS

- BB Chief Mates - 48% more
- BB 2nd Mates - 53% more
- BB 2nd Mates vs AMHS Master - 8.9% higher
- Black Ball Chief Engineers make on average 71% more than AMHS BB 1st Engineers - 57%
- BB 2nd Engineers - 63.%
- BB 2nd Engineers vs AMHS C/E - 31.6% higher

[2:34:27 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON directed attention to the red print in the boxes related to the wage comparison for the Washington State Ferries (WSDOT) and Black Ball Ferry Line (BBFL). She related that the companies used for wage comparison to the AMHS operate similar vessels and have similar license requirements, particularly for the BBFL.

MS. ADAMSON noted that the Black Ball ferry, Coho, is the sister ship to the AMHS ferry, Taku. She stated that the same three unions operating AMHS ferries also run the Black Ball and Washington state ferries. Still, those ferries typically run on a day schedule instead of a semi-monthly or longer schedule.

MS. ADAMSON stated that in terms of salaries, Black Ball Second Mates earn 9 percent more than AMHS Masters and Black Ball Second Engineers earn 31 percent more than AMHS Chief Engineers. She noted that AMHS competes with this pool.

[2:35:35 PM](#)

CHAIR MYERS asked where Black Ball ferries operate.

MS. ADAMSON answered that the Black Ball Ferry Line, a private company, operates between Port Angeles and Victoria, British Columbia. The majority of its passengers are tourists.

[2:36:05 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked whether the wage differential was "apples to apples" or if the company had deferred benefits that increased the overall earnings.

MR. GOLDRICH answered that he was unsure about BBFL. He related that MEBA has its own pension program but Washington State employees are under the Public Employee Retirement System (PERS).

MS. ADAMSON explained that the next several slides would somewhat cover it.

[2:37:02 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 19, Masters, Mates and Pilots Wage Comparison, which consisted of a bar chart for Masters, Mates and Pilots. She stated that WSDOT Chief Mates earn more than AMHS Masters and Second Mates earn more than AMHS Chief Mates. However, the benefits differ. AMHS employees receive a Cost of Living Differential (COLD) and leave. She explained that AMHS employees that live in Alaska receive a lump sum COLD, which varies per position. For instance, AMHS Third Mates would receive approximately \$250, and Masters would receive \$450 in COLD per pay period.

CHAIR MYERS asked whether the COLD was biweekly.

MS. ADAMSON replied that the figures were for biweekly pay periods.

SENATOR SHOWER asked whether the figures on slide 19 include 4d COLD.

[2:38:27 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON offered to provide graphs with the updated figures. She characterized it as a wage comparison but agreed that the figures did not include benefits. She noted that AMHS employees earn significantly more leave than the other two groups. However, the way AMHS employees must use leave evens it out. She stated that WTDOT or BBFL employees are essentially day workers, so if they are sick for two days, they return to the vessel on the third day. AMHS employees who are sick for two days are replaced for their entire two-week shift.

[2:39:17 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER wondered whether it would apply the same for WSDOT and BBFL employees as for AMHS employees.

MS. ADAMSON clarified that WSDOT and BBFL employees are back in port every night, so reliefs are readily available for their specific shifts.

[2:39:44 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 20, Marine Engineers Beneficial Association Wage Comparison. She indicated that the graphs were based only on wages, so it does not consider COLD or leave earnings. WSDOT only has one category for Assistant Engineers,

which is comparable to the AMHS First Assistant Engineer. Black Ball Chief Engineers earn nearly double what AMHS Chief Engineers earn. WSDOT Assistant Engineers make significantly more than AMHS Chief Engineers. She stated that even though AMHS employees have COLD and additional leave earnings, it is not enough to retain them.

[2:40:39 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked for the slides to be updated to provide an apples-to-apples comparison.

[2:40:59 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL surmised that AMHS employees are primarily going to WSDOT and BBFL. He asked what other companies were attracting AMHS MMP and MEBA employees, such as Bluewater Sailing.

MS. ADAMSON offered to do some research and report to the committee. She explained that most MMP are leaving AMHS to become Alaska Marine Pilots for better schedules and salaries. However, a few have gone to WSDOT, the offshore hiring hall, and the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU)].

MR. GOLDRICH responded that many MEBA members gravitate to sailing the deep sea for better schedules.

MR. WALLI responded that many of the Inland Boatman's Union members go to the tugboat companies and use the Seafarers International Union hiring halls or the American Maritime Officers (AMO) union to obtain offshore work. For example, members have gone to British Petroleum or Polar Marine as unlicensed stewards or deckhands.

[2:42:51 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE expressed an interest in the differential pay for the Black Ball Ferry Line. He wondered what a private-sector employer like BBFL does not have to provide employees that allows it to pay higher wages. He cautioned that he was not leaning toward privatizing AMHS but would like to understand why Alaska is not competitive.

MR. GOLDRICH responded that MEBA stated that BBFL provides pay increases twice annually, with a minimum of 2 percent tied to the Consumer Price Index.

MS. ADAMSON added that BBFL has a reliable and predictable customer base, consisting of a mix of commuters and tourists that helps its business model.

[2:44:35 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER asked whether other ferries, such as East Coast ferries could be used for comparison instead of WSDOT and BBFL. He wondered if Alaska could look to other state ferry systems to help improve AMHS retention for the long term.

[2:45:47 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON responded that she researched the Maine State Ferry (MaineDOT), North Carolina Department of Transportation, Ferry Division (NC Ferry Division), and a small ferry system in Florida. All three ferry systems used small Lituya-type vessels operating from one point and back. She explained it was hard to compare those systems because AMHS serves 3,500 miles of coastline. A Scottish group, Caledonian MacBrayne (CalMac), a public-private corporation, provides the best comparison since the ferries operate larger vessels on longer runs. She related that Southeast Conference used it as a great example in its AMHS report. She offered to provide some comparisons, but since it is foreign-owned and operated, it was not likely to result in an apples-to-apples comparison.

[2:47:04 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE remarked that the potential change to reduce the minimum route from 50 to 20-miles in federal infrastructure criteria was significant. He surmised that AMHS was likely the only one in the US that could qualify, although Catalina Island might have similar seasonality demand. He related his understanding that it would be difficult to find comparisons.

MS. ADAMSON stated MMP was open to using other ferry systems for comparison but these comparisons were based on ferry systems in the US that were relatively close to AMHS's system. She agreed that CalMac was similar to and the most relevant international ferry system for comparison purposes.

[2:48:15 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON stated that slide 21, Inland Boatman's Union Wage Comparison was self-explanatory.

[2:48:38 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE commented that Alaska was different and that the differences were significant. He stated that BBFL does not have staterooms or food service but strictly moves cars and people. He suspected this was reflected in the wage structure of the other positions.

MR. WALLI pointed out that BBFL has a Steward Department, but it was minimal because it is a day boat. He indicated that they have some cooks and pursers.

2:49:59 PM

MS. ADAMSON reviewed slide 22, Union Recommendations to Retain and Recruit Crewmembers.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- Work Crew Members Year Round
 - Create security that there will be regular paychecks
- Utilize Union Halls for certain positions
 - These can be filled on an as-needed basis
- Address Payroll and Labor Relations Issues
- Allow Union Dispatching
- Adjust AMHS Determined Minimum Qualifications to Facilitate Bidding
 - This can be done now
- Set Up A Training Fund for Entry Level Unlicensed Positions
 - Offer training for free with a 2 year commitment
- Change Shipyard Schedules for Unlicensed
 - Incentivize regular crew that are familiar to stay for yards
 - Create a way to prevent crews from being trapped away from their families for months at a time
- Recruit at Job Fairs, High Schools, Maritime Academies, etc.

MS. ADAMSON stated that the unions had suggested these recommendations over the years.

2:50:44 PM

SENATOR SHOWER asked whether each line item required policy changes or legislation.

MS. ADAMSON responded that working crew members year-round would involve contract negotiations. She cautioned that the three unions could not discuss some things because they are currently negotiating their contracts. Some items on slide 22 were being addressed in negotiations.

MS. ADAMSON said that MEBA currently uses union halls, and MMP and IBU were negotiating this point. She explained that it was complicated because the union hall requirements differed from the AMHS contract. Thus, the negotiations were broader, but the unions were open to changes. For example, it is complicated for MMP to hire using union halls since those employees lack pilotage and would be eligible for lower-level positions. However, MEBA and IBU are more flexible since those employees have already met their requirements.

[2:52:46 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER asked if employees must be union or if they can be non-union members.

MS. ADAMSON answered that nothing prevents someone from being hired if they choose not to join the union.

[2:53:26 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE asked whether there were currently any non-union employees in MMP, MEBA, or IBU.

MS. ADAMSON responded that MMP had hired two members as non-union members but they later joined.

MR. GOLDRICH responded that he was unaware of any nonunion members on AMHS but it would be possible.

MR. WALLI offered his view that IBU currently has three non-union members.

[2:54:12 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON returned to slide 22, Union Recommendations to Retain and Recruit Crewmembers. She offered to make broad statements on the issues because the unions are currently negotiating. She stated that these issues impact retention and potential hires because they affect AMHS's reputation in the industry. She deferred to Mr. Walli to discuss the bullet "Allow Union Dispatching."

[2:54:48 PM](#)

MR. WALLI stated that many of the IBU issues relate to dispatching and payroll. He said that IBU believes that if the union were responsible for dispatching, there wouldn't be any issues. He highlighted IBU's concerns related to incorrect crew lists that require filing grievances to correct them.

CHAIR MYERS stated that the dispatcher informs the drivers where to go in the trucking industry. He shared his understanding that the unions would pick the employees sailing on the vessels.

MR. WALLI noted that IBU is based on seniority, so the issues arise when members are not dispatched per their seniority.

SENATOR SHOWER asked whether that would be resolved via contract negotiations or if it would require legislation.

MR. WALLI answered that it could be resolved via policy or negotiations.

[2:56:25 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated that the executive branch, not the legislature, has that responsibility. He said it was nice to know the issues, but he felt uncomfortable discussing them. He asked how the legislature could help provide funding for any gaps, so the department has the room to negotiate and retain employees. He expressed interest in enticing, motivating, and retaining professional marine employees to stay in Alaska.

[2:58:22 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON emphasized the need to fund contracts at industry standards and to address training and how the crew is used.

[2:58:56 PM](#)

MR. GOLDRICH stated that MEBA members make a significant investment to come to Alaska, so they seek predictability to have a career in Alaska. Currently, AMHS does not provide that predictability. He related that most AMHS MEBA employees spent 15-20 years building careers in the past, which declined with the lack of predictability. Members don't know the funding level for AMHS or which vessels will operate, which takes a toll.

[3:00:01 PM](#)

SENATOR SHOWER reiterated his interest in knowing if policy or legislation was needed since the legislature is working on ways to make the ferry work. He emphasized the need for feedback.

[3:01:09 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE stated that the private sector has the same issues because companies hiring people for the North Slope must compete with wages on the Gulf Coast. He offered his view that Alaska has not done well in meeting the goal of drawing people to Alaska to become residents. These issues are consistent in almost every industry in Alaska.

[3:02:11 PM](#)

SENATOR KIEHL offered his view that stabilizing the system would help stabilize the workforce. He related that AMHS had experienced numerous fluctuations in service, including reducing service by 126 weeks just before COVID-19. He agreed that stabilizing the level of service was essential, that the state could make things better this year and the next several years, and work on SB 170.

[3:03:39 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON stated that Senator Shower raised the issue of running ships without sufficient ridership. She suggested that the solution would be to work with unions to create better schedules and work with the communities and the state to improve service to communities. She agreed that some vessels were running at 20 percent capacity, but these vessels should be at 90 percent capacity. She offered her view that it is in the unions' and the state's best interest to do so. She expressed an interest in working with the new AMHS Board, communities, and the state on this bill to create those kinds of solutions.

[3:04:29 PM](#)

SENATOR MICCICHE recalled the legislature did not realize the imperative nature of the department, viewed it as overfunded, noted that employees received geo-differential pay, and many lived outside Alaska. He offered his view that the legislature chipped away at the inefficient costs but did not address the issues. He said he hoped that the new AMHS Board could help make AMHS vessels the place to work, that the legislature would adequately fund it, stand up for the employees and make it happen by having the right vessels for the right routes and service. He stated that AMHS had extra routes, ships not fit for service in layup, and did not know how to navigate those issues effectively.

[3:06:27 PM](#)

MS. ADAMSON offered her view that the state, the legislature, and the unions line up well. She said that people like Mr. Walli and herself have the licensure work history of providing feedback on what will and won't work at AMHS. She stated that the unions would love the opportunity to work with the state, legislature, and AMHS to create efficiencies and address issues.

[3:07:06 PM](#)

CHAIR MYERS held SB 170 in committee.

3:07:24 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Myers adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting at 3:07 p.m.