

HCR

38

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE



Representative Jim Elkins  
Co-Chair  
Phone: (907) 465-3424  
Fax: (907) 465-3793

Representative Carl Gotto  
Co-Chair  
Phone: (907) 465-3743  
Fax: (907) 465-2381

State Capitol, Juneau, Alaska 99801  
Sponsor Statement  
House Concurrent Resolution No. 38

*“Urging the Department of transportation and Public Facilities to use the Alaska marine highway system fast ferries efficiently by deploying the fast ferries in northern Lynn Canal and Prince William Sound beginning in the summer of 2006, and to provide data regularly to the affected communities to enable the communities to evaluate the service effectively.”*

Frustration is being felt by the coastal communities in northern Lynn Canal and Prince William Sound, who, for years, have been promised reliable scheduling and deployment of the fast vehicle ferries. They feel they have yet to see this promise fulfilled.

In late 2004 and early 2005, a marketing group including residents of Cordova, Whittier, Valdez and Anchorage, held meetings with Alaska Airlines, the Alaska Railroad and others businesses to develop strategies to successfully incorporate the new fast ferry transportation system into the Prince William Sound area. Unfortunately, they were told at the last minute that the *M/V Chenega* wouldn't be operating in that area because, among other reasons, the labor negotiations had not been concluded in time to begin operations.

Earlier this winter, again with little warning, the *M/V Fairweather* was pulled from her regular schedule between Juneau, Haines, Skagway and Sitka and was deployed, along with the *M/V Chenega*, on “experimental” runs in southern Southeast. Those runs transported very few passengers and generated very little revenue. This was no surprise to those Alaskans who use the ferries year-round, but the communities were never consulted prior to the schedule change.

Because of the SOA and DOT's deficiency in long term planning, coastal communities who previously relied upon the ferries and their regular service, realize that it may no longer be a viable option. Also, no contingency plans are currently in place, which is disappointing due to status of the fleet, which is composed of so many old vessels. HCR 38 urges the DOT to revert back to its original plan and operate the *M/V Fairweather* on a year-round basis in northern Lynn Canal and the *M/V Chenega* on a year-round basis in Prince William Sound so that the state can determine the true demand and economic feasibility of these vessels in the areas for which they were designed. It also asks that a 2-year schedule be developed, and that quarterly updates be given to the mayors of the affected communities so they may also evaluate the performance of these vessels in many areas. The AMHS needs to become more reliable for those communities who depend on its service. The House Transportation Committee asks for your support on this resolution.

**HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 38**

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA**

**TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

**BY THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**

**Introduced: 3/29/06**

**Referred: Transportation, Finance**

**A RESOLUTION**

1 **Urging the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to use the Alaska marine**  
2 **highway system fast ferries efficiently by deploying the fast ferries in northern Lynn**  
3 **Canal and Prince William Sound beginning in the summer of 2006, and to provide data**  
4 **regularly to the affected communities to enable the communities to evaluate the service**  
5 **effectively.**

6 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

7 **WHEREAS** the Southeast Alaska region is coastal in nature, and the economies have  
8 evolved around and depend on reliable and predictable patterns of marine transportation; and

9 **WHEREAS** state ferries deliver people, food, health care, supplies, and equipment to  
10 coastal communities throughout the state, with economic effects far beyond the area in which  
11 they operate; and

12 **WHEREAS** failure to establish and publish baseline schedules at least two years in  
13 advance for all Alaska marine highway system routes reduces ridership and complicates  
14 connections within the system and with other modes of transportation; and

15 **WHEREAS** inconsistent planning and sudden changes to schedules have caused

1 negative economic effects on communities and their businesses; and

2 WHEREAS fast vehicle ferries were designed and deployed to upgrade the aging  
3 Alaska marine highway system fleet and to supplement the level of service by providing fast,  
4 efficient, and reliable transportation on point-to-point service runs to better meet local  
5 demand; and

6 WHEREAS local communities best understand their transportation needs and have a  
7 vested interest in developing local control over long-range strategies;

8 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Department of  
9 Transportation and Public Facilities to

10 (1) commit, on a year-round basis, a fast vehicle ferry to northern Lynn Canal  
11 servicing Juneau, Haines, Skagway, and Sitka;

12 (2) return, on a year-round basis, a fast vehicle ferry to Prince William Sound  
13 servicing Cordova, Valdez, and Whittier;

14 (3) effective October 2006, develop a schedule for these vessels that remains  
15 unchanged for two years, to determine the true demand and economic feasibility of the fast  
16 ferries in those respective regions; and

17 (4) provide mayors of the affected communities with relevant data on a  
18 quarterly basis to assist the communities with evaluation of the following:

- 19 (A) optimum scheduling and route selection;
- 20 (B) revenue maximization and operating costs;
- 21 (C) passenger satisfaction;
- 22 (D) overall profitability and efficiency of moving people and goods;

23 and

24 (E) feasibility of development of local ferry authorities.

Wave height 6-8 ft.  
18 ft. 12 ft. too high

\$1.4M down from operating costs.  
4 1/2 years since a 2 yr. schedule.

Dean Williams

Reducing fare

HCR 38

# STATE OF ALASKA

**DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND PUBLIC FACILITIES  
OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER**

**FRANK H. MURKOWSKI, GOVERNOR**

3132 CHANNEL DRIVE  
PO Box 112500  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-2500

FAX: (907) 586-8395  
PHONE: (907) 465-3800

March 8, 2006

The Honorable Gary Wilken, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Lyda Green, Co-Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

The Honorable Mike Chenault, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Kevin Meyer, Co-Chair  
House Finance Committee  
Alaska State Legislature  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182

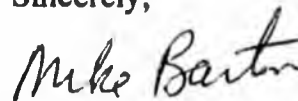
Dear Senator Wilken:

I want to be sure you are aware of the urgent need to augment the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) funds. This need results from unanticipated and sharply increased fuel costs. Quite frankly, without prompt passage of the much needed AMHS supplemental that was originally submitted in the Governor's Energy Supplemental bill the system will not be able to cover the second payroll in March or pay our vendors. As my staff has testified in committee hearings, these funds are necessary to meet the System's cash flow needs.

After the posting of today's marine union bi-weekly payroll, we anticipate there will be only \$4.2 million left in the Marine Highway Fund. This is not enough to cover the on-going bills of the System and the payroll which is due to process on March 22. By looking at the numbers, you can see my concern.

Your assistance in this situation would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,



Mike Barton  
Commissioner

cc: Senator Ben Stevens, Senate President  
Representative John Harris, Speaker of the House  
Senator Charlie Huggins, Chair of the Senate Transportation Committee  
Representative Jim Elkins, Co-Chair of the House Transportation Committee  
Representative Carl Gatto, Co-Chair of the House Transportation Committee  
Cheryl Frasca, Director, Office of Management and Budget  
Kevin Jardell, Legislative Liaison, Office of the Governor  
Robin Taylor, Deputy Commissioner / Director of Marine Operations, DOT&PF  
Nancy J. Slagle, Director, Division of Administrative Services, DOT&PF

*"Providing for the movement of people and goods and the delivery of state services."*

# CITY OF CORDOVA



April 3, 2006

Representative Bill Thomas, Jr.  
State Capitol Rm. 428  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: HCR 38

Dear Representative Thomas:

On behalf of the City of Cordova, I would like to express our support for HCR 38, relating to the deployment of the fast ferries in Prince William Sound and northern Lynn Canal year-round.

As you are aware, Cordova has been promised for years, beginning with the original Prince William Sound/Copper River Transportation Plan, that the second Fast Vehicle Ferry, the *M/V Chenega*, would begin operating in 2005 in Prince William Sound (PWS) between Valdez, Cordova and Whittier on a year-round schedule. In 2005, the ferry offered passenger service for only two weekends in our area, which certainly doesn't allow for any in-depth analysis of the potential economics regarding the operations of the vessel.

The residents of the Sound were also adversely impacted last summer when the re-scheduling from the fast ferry to the *M/V Aurora* was made with no advance warning. New bookings to our area were allowed only after the reservation system had been closed down for several weeks.

Our community has had only minor input on any of the recent decisions regarding scheduling, which is a normal courtesy and was standard operating procedure in the past. Schedule changes occur so often that it is nearly impossible to rely on schedule information, and this has only been exacerbated by the constant re-shuffling of the vessels.

HCR 38 will go a long way towards helping with these problems by re-deploying the fast ferries year-round in the areas for which they were built. By providing a 2 year baseline schedule, residents, visitors and business alike can have reliable information when making travel plans and business decisions. I understand that the Marine Transportation Advisory Board has also recommended that this baseline schedule be developed and implemented. With the valuable information provided by the Department on a quarterly basis, all of us can better help maximize the use of these vessels. It will also provide the data to help us determine the feasibility of the development of authorities to oversee the management of these fast ferries locally, not unlike the current Inter-Island Ferry Authority operating in southern Southeast Alaska.

Thank you for your work on marine transportation issues for our coastal communities. Please let me know if there is anything else we can do to help with the passage of HCR 38.

Sincerely,

Timothy L. Joyce, Mayor

TLJ:lk

# FISCAL NOTE

**STATE OF ALASKA**  
**2006 LEGISLATIVE SESSION**

Fiscal Note Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Bill Version: HCR 38  
 () Publish Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): \_\_\_\_\_ Dept. Affected: DOT & PF  
 Title Fast Ferries RDU Marine Highway System  
 Component Marine Vessel Operations  
 Sponsor H. Trans  
 Requester H. Trans Component No. 2604

**Expenditures/Revenues** (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011	FY 2012
Personal Services	2,398.2	2,398.2				
Travel	(20.7)	(20.7)				
Contractual	60.6	60.6				
Supplies	963.8	963.8				
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
<b>TOTAL OPERATING</b>	<b>3,401.9</b>	<b>3,401.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURES</b>						
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<b>CHANGE IN REVENUES ( 1076 )</b>	<b>1,076.8</b>					
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**FUND SOURCE** (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF	2,325.1	2,325.1				
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (1076 Marine Highway Fund)	1,076.8	1,076.8				
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,401.9</b>	<b>3,401.9</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

Estimate of any current year (FY2006) cost: 0.0

Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2007 budget proposal:

**POSITIONS**

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

**ANALYSIS:** (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This bill adds operation of the fast vehicle ferries in the winter (Oct. 1 through April 30) resulting in 23 weeks of additional service in Lynn Canal and 25.2 in Prince William Sound. The M/V *Chenega* will operate 4 days per week in Prince William Sound and the M/V *Fairweather* will operate 7 days/week in North Lynn Canal and Sitka. The Governor's amended budget provides for service in these areas during the summer time only. Providing this service reduces travel costs as it was anticipated that the boats would winter in the Pacific Northwest where there are appropriate facilities and travel was needed to fly crews back and forth. No new positions are added as there are positions currently operating the vessels. Operating the vessels in the winter is anticipated to generate \$1,076.8 for the Marine Hwy Fund.

This bill requires analysis of the true demand and economic feasibility of operating these boats after two years at which point the fiscal impacts for FY09, FY10, FY11, FY 12 will be determined.

Prepared by: Mary Siroky Phone (907) 228-7274  
 Division: Commissioner's Office Date/Time 4/03/2006 11:00AM  
 Approved by: Mike Barton Date 4/3/2006  
 Agency: Mike Barton, DOT&PF

8255 Aspen Avenue  
Juneau, AK 99801

April 11, 2006

The Honorable Representative Jim Elkins, Co-Chair  
The Honorable Representative Carl Gatto, Co-Chair  
House Transportation Committee  
State Capitol Room 17  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representatives Elkins and Gatto, and members of the House Transportation Committee,

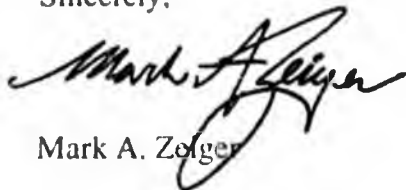
I support the Honorable Representative Bill Thomas's Resolution, HCR 38, urging the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to use the Alaska Marine Highway System efficiently and predictably.

It seems pretty clear that the ferry system is being manipulated to lower ridership and turn public opinion against it in favor of the proposed road to the Katzechin River, the *new* "preferred alternative," that DOT&PF is trying to convince us was the best choice all along. The department's relentless pursuit of a road is against the wishes of most Southeast Alaskans, and contrary to the best interests of most Alaskans. While a small percentage of our population will use the road, every one of us will pay for its support and upkeep, as well as lose the benefit of transportation funds that should go toward maintaining and improving existing transportation infrastructure around the state.

Even if the Transportation Committee supports construction of a road, completion of such an ambitious project is years away. Now, and until a road is opened, Alaskans need their ferry system. That need will not go away until the first private vehicles are allowed to use the road. Until then, the ferry system, particularly the fast ferries, should be used as they were originally intended rather than being shunted around at the whim of DOT&PF.

The Alaska Marine Highway requires upgrading, maintenance and improvement, just as any transportation system. It also needs to be managed efficiently and reliably to benefit Alaskans and those who visit our great state. It should not be used as a pawn in a political game. Please support Representative Thomas's resolution.

Sincerely,



Mark A. Zelger

April 11, 2006

Members of the House Transportation Committee:

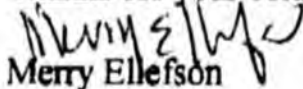
My name is Merry Ellefson and I live at 8170 N. Douglas in Juneau. I'm here to ask for your support of HCR 38.

The fast ferries are likely to succeed when placed in high volume areas such as the Lynn Canal and Prince William Sound. It's my understanding that in operating only six months, the Fairweather carried the third highest number of passengers in the AMHS fleet for the entire year of 2004. Further, if given the chance to serve Northern SE, I think the Fairweather will prove to be a vital link in our quest to efficiently access Juneau, if schedules and rates are properly managed.

Many of us living here could have advised Mr. Taylor, before he made the half of a million dollar decision to pull the Chenega from the Sound and send it south, that the low volume and log infested Juneau-Petersburg, and Petersburg- Ketchikan fast ferry links were doomed for failure.

Please, I ask you to give the fast ferries the chance to help many Alaskans overcome the transportation challenges here and support HCR 38.

Thanks for your consideration.

  
Merry Ellefson

merryellefson@aol.com



Co-Chair Representative Carl Gatto  
Co-Chair Representative Jim Elkins  
Representative Vic Kohring  
Representative Mark Neuman  
Representative Bill Thomas  
Representative Mary Kapsner  
Representative Woodie Salmon

April 11, 2006

To the Members of the House Transportation Committee,

I am writing on behalf of the Alaska Transportation Priorities Project in support of House Concurrent Resolution 38, sponsored by Representative Bill Thomas. ATPP is a statewide watchdog organization advocating for a safe, efficient, environmentally appropriate, and fiscally responsible transportation system for the State of Alaska.

We believe the concepts outline in HCR 38 will move the State closer to those four goals. The Fast Vehicle Ferries can be used most efficiently by placing them on short routes with high volumes. The Lynn Canal and Prince William Sound routes are ideal for this situation. Furthermore, preliminary results show that the Fast Vehicle Ferries have actually made money in the Lynn Canal. We obtained raw data from the Department of Transportation for trips made in the Lynn Canal from June 8 to September 11, 2004. From this data we were able to calculate that the *M/V Fairweather* profits were \$255,279 from revenues of \$1,409,529

Ferries in general are historically safer than roads, particularly through mountainous terrain that characterizes the Lynn Canal and Prince William Sound. Ferries allow maritime communities to maximize one of their best assets – the surrounding waterways. The Juneau Access study found that the Marine Highway System, including the Fast Vehicle Ferries, costs the state half of what we would pay to maintain the currently proposed road-shuttle ferry alternative (see the Federal Highway Administration's April 2006 Record of Decision, page 4.)

Unfortunately, it is extremely difficult for communities and decision makers to find accurate information regarding the health of the Marine Highway System. It is unclear if it is a deliberate manipulation of data or simply a dearth of information. In any case, information critical for making sound decisions about the future of the ferry system has not been made available in an easily digestible form to the public nor key decision makers.

In closing, HCR 38 is a prudent step toward the goal of operating a more sustainable Marine Highway System.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Emily Ferry".

Emily Ferry  
Coordinator, Alaska Transportation Priorities Project

4/10/06

Dear Representative,

As the Haines Chamber of Commerce President, I urge you to support HCR 38, sponsored by Representative Bill Thomas. I have a great concern about the inconsistent ferry service in Lynn Canal that services Haines and Skagway. As a rural community, Haines is greatly affected by the lack of consistent, reliable ferry service. This Resolution urges DOT to use the fast ferries efficiently by scheduling them on high-volume routes, namely Lynn Canal and Prince William Sound. It is no surprise that since the Juneau Road Access has become top priority for DOT, that the service of our small communities in the upper Lynn Canal has become low priorities. This resolution would urge DOT and Public Facilities to commit to a year-round, fast vehicle ferry for Juneau, Haines, Skagway and Sitka; develop a schedule that would remain unchanged for two years; return, on a year-round basis, a fast vehicle ferry to Prince William sound; and provide mayors of the affected communities with relevant data to assist the communities for evaluation purposes.

Haines tourism industry has suffered greatly by the ever changing ferry schedule, therefore making it very difficult, if not impossible for the traveling public to make reservations or long term plans for their travel purposes. I urge you to support this resolution. After all, without our elected officials, our voices are not heard.

I thank you for your consideration.

Karen M. Hess / President  
Haines Chamber of Commerce




**State of Alaska**  
**Cordova Legislative Information Office**  
P.O. Box 2248 Cordova, Alaska 99574  
907-424-5461 Fax 907-424-5462  
Cordova\_LIO@legis.state.ak.us

**To:**  
**House Transportation Co-Chair**  
**Representative Jim Elkins**  
**907-465-3793**

**Comments:**

Please enter this written testimony into the record for HCR 38, scheduled for hearing today April 11 at 1:30 pm.

Thank you,  
Mimi Briggs   
Cordova LIC - Reserve

6 pages, including cover.

**Number of pages including this one:**

Osa Schultz  
PO Box 1291  
Cordova, AK 99574  
907-424-5269

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March 30, 2006

**Re: HCR 38**

**To: Alaska State House Transportation Committee Hearing**

I AM WRITING TESTAMONY IN STRONG FAVOR OF THIS BILL TO RESTORE THE FAST FERRY TO THE PRINCE WILLIAM SOUND ROUTE.

As a Cordova resident for over 20 years, it has been a pleasure to finally have a reliable and affordable alternative to commute to Anchorage for the last year.

I am personally aware of more friends and associates using the new schedule than ever before, proving when the service is available it will be utilized.

As a business owner of a lodging facility I have also found it to enhance my number of winter guests, so obviously other state residents are making use of the more frequent sailings and winter Whittier service as well.

As a 10-year board member of the Cordova Chamber of Commerce I have an acute understanding of how critical it is to give the Chenega a chance to develop its market. Many local investors have projects that hinged on the fast ferry connection with Anchorage. It was a huge compromise to have it pulled out of the sound last summer.

Lastly, as a mother of a junior high student, I know how critical the ferry schedule is to the recreation activities sponsored by the school.

As the bill sponsored by The House Transportation Committee states:

WHEREAS inconsistent planning and sudden changes to schedules have caused negative economic effects on communities and their businesses

BE IT RESOLVED ...to develop a schedule for these vessels that remains unchanged for 2 years to determine true demand and economic feasibility

**I URGE YOU TO SUPPORT AND PASS HCR 038**

**Thank you, Osa Schultz Box 1291 Cordova, Alaska 99574**

To the House Transportation Committee

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Transportation Committee on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2006

I would like to thank Representative Thomas for introducing HCR 38 which would return the FVF Chenga to Prince William Sound. I live in Cordova, am a teacher and basketball coach and a parent. While I expect the Chenega to have a positive effect on the economy of Cordova, I also feel it has the potential to reduce the travel time of our students and school personnel while on interschool athletic trips. This is due to daylight departure times and reduced sailing time.

During just the basketball season our students might have saved 20 to 25 hours of travel time. Considering a trip from Cordova to Hutchison HS in Fairbanks involves 5 hours of sailing on the Aurora and then a bus ride of 8 hours these can be critical hours on some pretty long trips. With the Aurora our students returned to Cordova after midnight Sunday nights but were expected to attend Monday classes.

Most importantly the bill addresses the issue of establishing a baseline schedule two years in advance. Not only does this help tourism but it would help the school by enabling it to better mesh its' schedule which is done over a year in advance with the ferry's. This last year we filled the ferry on four basketball trips; two to Valdez, one to Districts at Monroe in Fairbanks and one to the State tournament in Anchorage. We would like to do this regularly and I feel the Chenega would also help to encourage parents from Glennallen, Valdez, and further north to similarly follow their teams when they travel to Cordova.

Virginia Anderson  
PO Box 1603  
412 Davis Ave.  
Cordova, Alaska 99574

[vanderson@cordova.schoolaccess.net](mailto:vanderson@cordova.schoolaccess.net)

To the House Transportation Committee

Please enter into the record my testimony to the House Transportation Committee on April 6<sup>th</sup>, 2008

HCR 38 as introduced by Representative Thomas is important to the future of the City of Cordova. This bill addresses two vital needs; the return of a ferry capable of shortening the sailings to and from Cordova and also the establishment of a baseline schedule two years in advance. Please advance the bill in full.

The state's transportation plan for Prince William Sound as is published on its' DOT website describes the Chenega and how it should be implemented in PWS. This is a plan which was predicated on meeting the needs of PWS, improving service overall, and saving money. This is an important piece of our transportation infrastructure which should enable us to better establish a visitor industry. Last summer Cordova had the Aurora traveling the schedule which was designed for the Chenega. We greatly appreciated the increased number of sailings but found that it was difficult for visitors who arrived for the weekend at 1am Saturday morning and departed from their hotel rooms at 4 am either Sunday morning or 4 am Monday morning. Hotel operators pointed out it is difficult to sell a romantic weekend based on this schedule. I periodically need to travel on the ferry to get to business locations. The early departures make efficient work more difficult when I arrive on location. When you wake at 3 am, check in at 4, and load at 5 then semidoze for 5-7 hours as you ride the ferry, it is difficult to be sharp when the jobsite is reached. And you hit the fatigue wall early. The Chenega can change that.

The Chenega will provide for a great summer schedule, we learned that during the two weeks late last summer that it ran for customers. During the winter it should provide the flexibility to meet the needs of local travelers, sports teams, and tourism efforts. While I am not aware at this time of a winter schedule, I know that the Chenega could be a day boat even with a greatly reduced (and maybe more fuel efficient) speed.

We have heard disparaging things about the boat. However, in PWS we have far fewer logs than SE Alaska and wave action in PWS is different than found on SE routes. Only after the boat is used year round in Prince William Sound will we know how it will perform here. If we are provided with information which allows us to combine local needs and knowledge into the use of the boat, as HCR38 asks, we expect to find that it does work well and efficiently throughout the year.

Cordova is ready to sell itself and the ferry, we were excited about doing this last summer and we are again. But we are gun shy now and this bill will help us to feel that there is some certainty that our efforts will be backed up with the proper boat. I have sailed on the Chenega and it is a selling point itself.

Years ago I lobbied for and was in on the decision to implement the first Cordova to Whittier ferry run which turned out to be quite successful. I have been continually involved as chair of our Ferry committee. I urged the lowering of fares in PWS years ago when I discovered they were much higher than the rest of the system, I knew that action would increase ridership. And I participated in the creation of the PWS and CR Transportation plan. I expect the Chenega to be very successful in PWS and look forward to the implementation of the transportation plan.

Michel Anderson  
POBox 1603  
412 Davis Ave.  
Cordova, Alaska 99574  
mvaclay@ak.net

907-424-3142

**LIO Cordova**

---

**From:** Blackler [docblack@ctc.ak.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, March 31, 2006 9:43 AM  
**To:** LIO Cordova  
**Subject:** House Resolution

We would like to support the House Concurrent Resolution that Bill Thomas has sponsored regarding the Chenega Ferry service in Prince William Sound.

As business owners we know that Cordova needs the additional revenue that tourists can bring to Cordova. As residents we have numerous family members that travel from the lower 48 every year to enjoy our fishing and our community. It would be wonderful for them to have the added advantage of a faster ferry with daily service to Cordova.

Jerry & Vicki Blackler  
Alpine Diesel  
Cordova AK

4/5/2006

To the House Transportation Committee  
4/4/06

Please enter into the record my testimony to House Transportation Committee on HCR 38.

Having a family of six we make several trips a year to Anchorage we love to take the ferry so we can take our own vehicle and stock up on needed items. One of the biggest problems is the time line. Having a set time for an extended period of time allows for making appointments far in advance (medical specialist), planning for travel and shopping. Being land locked and the ferry being our highway we should receive priority and be subsidized because it is our highway.

Thank you,

Karen Peterson  
PO Box 101  
Cordova, AK 99574

**Lesley Bullock**

---

**From:** Dick Flegel [dflegel@fnbalaska.com]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 10, 2006 12:22 PM  
**To:** Rep. Jim Elkins  
**Subject:** (HCR) 38

I support House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 38. I believe that fast ferries can be operated efficiently and effectively, especially if they are placed on high-volume routes like the Lynn Canal.

I believe the businesses in Haines have been damaged by the Murkowski administration's planned obsolescence of our ferry system.

I ask you to support Bill Thomas and (HCR) 38.

Thanks for your consideration.

Dick Flegel, Banker and Haines resident

=====  
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# CITY OF CORDOVA



April 3, 2006

Representative Bill Thomas, Jr.  
State Capitol Rm. 428  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: HCR 38

Dear Representative Thomas:

On behalf of the City of Cordova, I would like to express our support for HCR 38, relating to the deployment of the fast ferries in Prince William Sound and northern Lynn Canal year-round.

As you are aware, Cordova has been promised for years, beginning with the original Prince William Sound/Copper River Transportation Plan, that the second Fast Vehicle Ferry, the *M/V Chenega*, would begin operating in 2005 in Prince William Sound (PWS) between Valdez, Cordova and Whittier on a year-round schedule. In 2005, the ferry offered passenger service for only two weekends in our area, which certainly doesn't allow for any in-depth analysis of the potential economics regarding the operations of the vessel.

The residents of the Sound were also adversely impacted last summer when the re-scheduling from the fast ferry to the *M/V Aurora* was made with no advance warning. New bookings to our area were allowed only after the reservation system had been closed down for several weeks.

Our community has had only minor input on any of the recent decisions regarding scheduling, which is a normal courtesy and was standard operating procedure in the past. Schedule changes occur so often that it is nearly impossible to rely on schedule information, and this has only been exacerbated by the constant re-shuffling of the vessels.

HCR 38 will go a long way towards helping with these problems by re-deploying the fast ferries year-round in the areas for which they were built. By providing a 2 year baseline schedule, residents, visitors and business alike can have reliable information when making travel plans and business decisions. I understand that the Marine Transportation Advisory Board has also recommended that this baseline schedule be developed and implemented. With the valuable information provided by the Department on a quarterly basis, all of us can better help maximize the use of these vessels. It will also provide the data to help us determine the feasibility of the development of authorities to oversee the management of these fast ferries locally, not unlike the current Inter-Island Ferry Authority operating in southern Southeast Alaska.

Thank you for your work on marine transportation issues for our coastal communities. Please let me know if there is anything else we can do to help with the passage of HCR 38.

Sincerely,

Timothy L. Joyce, Mayor

TLJ:lk

**Jennifer Baxter**

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**From:** Dan Egolf [aknature@alaskanaturetours.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 10, 2006 12:03 PM  
**To:** Sen. Lyca Green; Rep. Bill Thomas; Sen. Donny Olson; Sen. Gary Wilken; Sen. Lyman Hoffman; Sen. Fred Dyson; Sen. Bert Stedman; Sen. Con Bunde; Rep. Carl Gatto; Rep. Jim Elkins; Rep. Vic Kohring; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. Mary Kapsner; Rep. Woodie Salmon  
**Subject:** Support for the state's ferries

Dear Alaska Legislators:

Please support full funding of our ferry system. As you may know 40% of the visitors to Anchorage use the ferries. The fragile economies of SE Alaska have been based around marine transportation for fifty years. Robin Taylor is a "fox in the chicken coop" and needs to be replaced. The state should go "head hunting" for a non-partisan retired navy admiral or an administrator from Seattle who knows how to move people, vehicles goods and equipment efficiently on the water. The Federal Highway Administration estimates that the Juneau road/shuttle/ferry combination will be twice as expensive as the existing ferry system over the long run. The current truncated road/shuttle idea will cost the State \$122 million, while the ferries will cost the State \$61 million over the same 35-year period.

Please support Bill Thomas's Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 38 and fully fund all of our ferries. I would appreciate hearing back from you regarding this important issue. Thanks!

Sincerely,

Dan Egolf,  
a concerned business owner in Haines, AK  
(907) 766-2876

**Jennifer Baxter**

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**From:** James Alborough [guru@bearstar.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, April 10, 2006 11:43 AM  
**To:** Rep. Carl Gatto  
**Cc:** Rep. Vic Kohring; Rep. Mark Neuman; Rep. Jim Elkins; Rep. Bill Thomas; Rep. Mary Kapsner; Rep. Woodie Salmon  
**Subject:** Support for House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 38

Dear committee members,  
I rely on reliable, predictable ferry service in the upper Lynn Canal. I have been particularly impressed with the fast ferries that have been running for the past year or two. Their service enables me to conduct my business in a sound, economical and predictable manner.

I would like to voice my support House Concurrent Resolution (HCR) 38. I believe that fast ferries can be operated efficiently and effectively, especially if they are placed on high-volume routes like the Lynn Canal.

Thank you for your consideration,  
James Alborough

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James Alborough  
Bear Star -- <http://bearstar.net>  
Web Design and Computer Services  
907-766-2082

Also check out <http://hainesak.com>

Good afternoon members of the committee, staffs and members of the public. My name is Tim Joyce and I am Mayor of Cordova.

You should have a resolution and a letter from the City of Cordova in your packets of information as it was previously submitted. These are just a couple of the many resolutions and letters sent to a variety of places over the last year regarding the AMHS.

I want to voice my strong support for HCR 38. This resolution addresses some of the real weaknesses that have been exhibited in the Alaska Marine Highway System over the past year. When a business operation fails to follow the plans that were developed that included the wants and needs of its customers, that business eventually will fail. Unfortunately, I see that happening now with the AMHS. Nearly every business owner in Cordova that relies to some degree on the AMHS for transport of their customers has ask me if I know for sure that the Chenega will be operating in PWS this year. The only response I can give them is to say "that is what I have been told." Those people walk away shaking their head because they were told - no guaranteed that the Chenega would operate in PWS last year. You are all familiar with what happened then.

I am here today because HCR 38 can correct many of the past mistakes and would immediately stimulate the business economy in Cordova. If businesses and people know in advance what the ferry schedule would be - not just tomorrow, but 6 months from now and even a year

from now, they could plan their business travel and schedule events. Having a two year schedule is not particularly hard to provide and it will increase rider ship over time just because of the dependability.

Finally, I was at the dedication of the Chenega when she was being built in Bridgeport, Conn. That vessel was designed and built to be operated in PWS. The PWS Transportation Plan calls for the fast ferry to be operated year round in PWS. Why that vessel was moved to other locations with only two weekends of service here defies logic. HCR 38 will correct most of the errors made by the AMHS in PWS over the last year.

Thank you for your time and I strongly encourage this committee to move HCR 38 forward.