



RESOLUTION 19-50

A RESOLUTION OF THE ALEUTIANS EAST BOROUGH ASSEMBLY SUPPORTING THE FUNDING OF THE ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM OPERATING BUDGET AT SUSTAINABLE LEVELS UNTIL REFORM RECOMMENDATIONS ARE ENACTED AND MAINTAINING FUNDING FOR REPLACEMENT OF THE M/V TUSTUMENA

WHEREAS, the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) has been providing essential transportation to Alaska's coastal communities since 1963; and

WHEREAS, the AMHS has 11 vessels that serve 33 Alaskan communities stretching from Metlakatla to Unalaska, including five Aleutians East Borough communities; and

WHEREAS, the AMHS is vital for coastal Alaskan communities, particularly those that are not located on the State's road system; and

WHEREAS, the AMHS has already sustained significant funding reductions that have reduced services throughout the system; and

WHEREAS, further reductions in the AMHS will harm tourism, commerce, economic development, and quality of life for nearly 100,000 Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, the Southeast Conference is completing an AMHS Reform Plan to recommend changes in the way the AMHS is structured and managed to provide system services without increasing State contributions; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's proposed FY20 budget proposed a 68.4% cut in the AMHS budget and a likely discontinuation of service on October 1, 2019; and

WHEREAS, the Governor's budget further proposes the hiring of a "qualified marine consultant" to recommend cuts to the ferry system, and a reallocation of about \$25 million in state match to leverage federal funds to build a badly needed replacement for the M/V Tustumena; and

WHEREAS, cuts that lead to discontinuation of AMHS service prior to completion of the AMHS Reform Plan and recommendations from a "qualified marine consultant" are premature and will do damage to rural communities, governments, schools, and businesses that have few transportation alternatives.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Aleutians East Borough Assembly supports sustainable funding for the AMHS for FY20 pending completion and implementation of the AMHS Reform Plan.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that any newly formed governing board for the AMHS include at least one representative from the Southwest Alaska region.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the State keep funding for replacement of the M/V Tustumena in place to replace a vessel that is operating beyond its intended life and has a recent history of extensive repairs that has kept the vessel out of service for extended periods of time.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the Aleutians East Borough on this 14th day of March, 2019.



Alvin D. Osterback, Mayor

ATTEST:



Tina Anderson, Clerk