

U.S. Department of  
Homeland Security

United States  
Coast Guard



Commander  
Seventeenth Coast Guard District

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5216  
December 4, 2015

Alaska Marine Highway System  
Attn: General Manager  
P.O. Box 112505  
6858 Glacier Highway  
Juneau, AK 99811-2505

RECEIVED

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DOT & PF  
Deputy Commissioner

Dear Mr. Neussl:

I request your assistance in seeking a mutually beneficial process that will allow Coast Guard members and their families to make timely reservations with the Alaska Marine Highway System while maintaining the State's desire for good fiscal stewardship.

Recent change in the AMHS reservations policy requires payment be received when making reservations and instituted a series of tiered cancellation fees. These changes, coupled with the potential of reduced ferry service will likely have a significantly impact Coast Guard readiness due to its effect on our members' ability to transfer to Alaska in a timely manner. As you are aware, the summer season traditionally sees the bulk of our personnel transfers.

More than 85% of our members in Alaska are stationed in communities that are off the road system. As such, the AMHS is a key service allowing them to transport family, vehicles, pets, and some of the basic household necessities and supplies needed while they await shipment of their household goods, which often takes months due to long distances involved.

Unfortunately the complexities of a transfer to Alaska, which is considered overseas for Coast Guard personnel, often means our members don't receive finalized transfer orders until late spring and even early summer in some cases. Without orders in hand, Coast Guard fiscal policy prohibits members from obligating the government to pay for AMHS tickets. As you are also aware, waiting until later in the season to make reservations place our personnel at tremendous risk of not being able to secure a berth in time to meet their reporting obligations.

I am confident there is a compromise that would allow members to make reservations early in the season while honoring the AMHS's need for assurances that travel will be completed as agreed while minimizing a member's personal financial exposure. I request our staffs collectively consider any of a variety of options in hopes of reaching a timely solution. My points of contact in this matter are CWO Morgan Ferrer who may be reached at 907-487-5170 extension 6647 or e-mail [Morgan.E.Ferrer@uscg.mil](mailto:Morgan.E.Ferrer@uscg.mil) or YNCM Lloyd Tuchman at extension 6659 and e-mail [Lloyd.E.Tuchman@uscg.mil](mailto:Lloyd.E.Tuchman@uscg.mil).

I appreciate your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "D. B. Abel".

D. B. ABEL, RADM  
Commander  
Seventeenth Coast Guard District