

- f. Resolution No. 25-2963 – Support to Reestablish Regular Alaska Marine Highway Service to Prince Rupert, Canada

**Office of the City Clerk
City of Ketchikan, Alaska**

**Kim Stanker, City Clerk
Taylor Lee, Deputy City Clerk**

To: Mayor & Council

From: Kim Stanker, City Clerk

Date: April 25, 2025

Subject: Resolution No. 25-2963 – Support to Re-Establish Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Service to Prince Rupert, Canada and Support Consideration of Hyder, Alaska as an Alternate Route – Mayor Sivertsen

Resolution No. 25-2963 recognizes close economic, social and cultural ties between Southeast Alaska and Prince Rupert, and joins the Southeast Conference to re-establish regular Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Service to Prince Rupert. During the Alaska Municipal League's (AML) Winter Legislative Conference, representatives from Southeast Conference (SEC) and the Mayors of Metlakatla, Saxman, the City of Ketchikan, and the Ketchikan Gateway Borough discussed the urgent need for the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) to reestablish ferry service to Prince Rupert BC. As a result of this discussion, it was suggested that Southeast mayors unite and advocate to the State of Alaska for a more acute focus on finding a solution to restoring the Prince Rupert connection, or as an alternate solution, a route to Hyder, Alaska. Prince Rupert represents the State of Alaska's primary focus, while recognizing two significant changes that must be addressed before resuming service: the Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS) requirements under the Maritime Transportatin Security of Act of 2002 (Canada also has its own Canadian Supplement to the SOLAS convention) and the complexity of using federal funding for construction in Canada due to the Build America, By America Act (BABA).

RECOMMENDED MOTION

I move that the City Council approve Resolution No. 25-2963 to re-establish regular Alaska Marine Highway Ferry Service to Prince Rupert, Canada, or to Hyder, Alaska, as an alternate route to meet the demand for the service.

CITY OF KETCHIKAN, ALASKA

RESOLUTION NO. 25-2963

A RESOLUTION OF THE COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF KETCHIKAN, ALASKA; BY JOINING THE EFFORTS OF SOUTHEAST CONFERENCE IN WORKING TO RE-ESTABLISH REGULAR ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY FERRY SERVICE TO PRINCE RUPERT, CANADA, TO MEET DEMAND FOR THE SERVICE AND SUPPORT CONSIDERATION OF THE COMMUNITY OF HYDER, ALASKA, AS AN ALTERNATIVE ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY PORT OF CALL IN THE EVENT THAT ONGOING EFFORTS FAIL TO RETURN SERVICE TO PRINCE RUPERT, BRITISH COLUMBIA; AND ESTABLISHING AN EFFECTIVE DATE

WHEREAS, Southeast Alaska shares close commercial, cultural, and social ties with British Columbia; and

WHEREAS, sustaining, growing and strengthening those ties benefits residents on both sides of our shared border; and

WHEREAS, for decades, regular passenger and vehicle ferry service between Southeast Alaska and Prince Rupert provided a means of sustaining, growing, and strengthening commercial, cultural, and social relationships; and

WHEREAS, year-round service to Prince Rupert typically moved approximately 13,000 passengers and 6,000 vehicles to and from British Columbia annually; and

WHEREAS, in the event of a natural or unnatural disaster, there will be a necessity for an alternative transportation corridor apart from AMHS service to Bellingham and Haines/Skagway; and

WHEREAS, the docking facility used by AMHS in Prince Rupert is in significant disrepair, and requires extensive renovation and upgrades, and has been condemned; and

WHEREAS, conflicting requirements as to the U.S. domestic sourcing (Buy America) of renovation and upgrade materials, as well as challenges presented by Safety of Life at Sea (SOLAS), and other regulatory requirements all contribute to delays in moving forward with repairs needed to re-establish AMHS ferry service between Southeast Alaska and Prince Rupert; and

WHEREAS, efforts to resolve the conflicts, which include the filing of two written waivers to the US Department of Transportation addressing the Buy America requirement, have to date been unsuccessful; and

WHEREAS, public comment to AMHS consistently calls for the reestablishment of AMHS service to the British Columbia road network; and

WHEREAS, failed efforts to secure a return of AMHS service to Prince Rupert merit the establishment of a replacement link to the Canadian highway system to the community of Hyder as an alternate route; and

WHEREAS, the community of Hyder, Alaska borders Canada and the Canadian road system, and the Canadian city of Stewart; and

WHEREAS, AMHS service to Hyder avoids the SOLAS, Buy America material sourcing, and other significant regulatory requirements inherent in an AMHS route landing in Canada; and

WHEREAS, a prerequisite to AMHS service to Hyder as an alternate replacement route would require design, permitting, and construction of a full terminal facility, including docking, loading, terminal, parking, and access improvements; and

WHEREAS, access to the Canadian highway system at a point in Southern British Columbia provides a critical transportation link between Southeast Alaska and the North American road system; and

WHEREAS, at its October 23, 2024, meeting, the Alaska Marine Highway Operations Board recommended that the AMHS move expeditiously to establish service to Hyder in the event that the US Department of Transportation denies the Buy America waiver pending for improvements needed at the AMHS facility in Prince Rupert; and

WHEREAS, draft Amendment 2 of the Alaska State Transportation Improvement Plan includes funding to “Conduct a reconnaissance study evaluating the feasibility of constructing and operating a ferry terminal in Hyder, Alaska”; and

WHEREAS, said reconnaissance study should include a cost-benefit analysis of the Prince Rupert and the conceptual Hyder AMHS routes, to include an evaluation of traveler amenities and options of the two routes.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Council of the City of Ketchikan, Alaska, as follows:

Section 1: The City of Ketchikan supports action by the AMHOB to consider new AMHS service to the community of Hyder in the event that the US Department of Transportation denies AKDOT&PF’s application for a waiver to the Buy America requirement for the long-planned upgrade to the AMHS docking facility at Prince Rupert.

Section 2: The City of Ketchikan endorses completion of the Cost-Benefit Analysis of the Prince Rupert and the conceptual Hyder AMHS routes, to include an evaluation of traveler and freight amenities and options of the two routes.

Section 3: The City of Ketchikan calls on the Alaska Governor and Legislature to support Alaska Marine Highway System service to Hyder in the event that ongoing efforts fail to return service to Prince Rupert.

Section 4: This resolution shall become effective immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND APPROVED by a duly constituted quorum of the City Council for the City of Ketchikan on this 1st day of May, 2025.

Bob Sivertsen, Mayor

ATTEST:

Kim Stanker, City Clerk