

## Debra Thompson

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**From:** Klein, Chere (Murkowski) <Chere\_Klein@murkowski.senate.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 30, 2023 8:05 AM  
**To:** Debra Thompson; Stephen Giesbrecht  
**Subject:** \$131 Million More in Infrastructure Funds to Support Rural Ferry Service

Good morning,  
Good news for the AMHS – hopefully we will see more service in the next few years!

*Chère Klein*  
Ketchikan/Southern SE Delegation Office  
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**From:** Press Office (Murkowski) <Press\_Office@murkowski.senate.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, November 30, 2023 7:23 AM  
**Subject:** \$131 Million More in Infrastructure Funds to Support Rural Ferry Service



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

November 30, 2023

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## **\$131 Million More in Infrastructure Funds to Support Rural Ferry Service**

**Washington, DC** – U.S. Senators Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, both R-Alaska, today announced the Federal Transit Administration is awarding \$131 million more in bipartisan infrastructure investments to support the Alaska Marine Highway System’s operations and recapitalize portions of the fleet.

In January, Senator Murkowski announced [\\$285 million in infrastructure](#) funding to improve the reliability and service Alaska’s ferry system—an announcement she marked as a “[big fat deal](#)” for Alaska and its ferry system which serves more than 30 communities across 3,500 miles of coastline.

“Today’s announcement by the FTA is another ‘big fat deal’ for the Alaskans who rely on our critical ferry system—this transformational funding will help address the system’s crumbling operations and ensure sustainable connections to rural communities,” **said Senator Lisa Murkowski**. “I grew up using the ferry system to get around Southeast, and I know how important the Alaska Marine Highway System is to so many Alaskan families. By supporting operations across the state and replacing the M/V Tustumena serving Southwest Alaska, we are helping connect coastal communities across the state. When leading negotiations of the bipartisan infrastructure law, I was focused on ensuring our Alaska Marine Highway System would be healthy and strong, and today’s announcement will help that vision



succeed. I encourage the State to smartly take advantage of these investments—the future of the Alaska Marine Highway System depends on their efforts and contribution. We cannot miss this transformational opportunity.”

“The major awards announced today for the Alaska Marine Highway System are excellent news for Alaska’s coastal communities and the thousands of Alaskans who rely on the ferry system,” **said Senator Dan Sullivan**. “The vast majority of Alaska’s communities have no connection to the road system, which means ports and ferries are as essential in our state as roads and bridges are in most other parts of the country. I commend Senator Murkowski for championing this ferry program in the bipartisan infrastructure law, which continues to bear fruit for Alaska. As a member of the Commerce and EPW Committees, I will continue to press for investments in Alaska’s ports and ferries, which are vital to the economic interests and well-being of Alaskans across Southeast, the Gulf and the Aleutians.”

“Thanks to Senators Murkowski and Sullivan for their continued support in funding the much needed replacement for the M/V Tustumena and operational funds for the Alaska Marine Highway System,” **said State Senate President Gary Stevens (R-Kodiak)**.

“It is great news to have more financial assistance from the Federal Government to facilitate the rejuvenation of the operations of the Alaska Marine Highway,” **said State Senator Bert Stedman (R-Sitka)**. “I want to thank both Senator Murkowski and Senator Sullivan for their hard work in helping to stabilize the Marine Highway, and I look forward to working with the delegation to secure the necessary matching funding from the State.”

“These dollars are critical to rebuild our coastal infrastructure,” **said State Senator Jesse Kiehl (D-Juneau)**. “Replacing ships and investing in crews builds a sustainable, more efficient ferry system for the next generation of Alaskans. This summer I reassured Sen. Murkowski and Sec. Buttigieg: ‘Alaska is investing this once-in-a-generation funding with an eye on the far horizon.’ We’re grateful for these targeted investments in the ferry system from our federal partners—and we’re putting them to wise use.”

“The Alaska Marine Highway System serves a critical role in Alaska’s transportation system. I thank our federal delegation for their continued bipartisan efforts to secure investments for the Alaska Marine Highway System,” **said State Senator James Kaufman (R-Anchorage)**. “I also applaud the AMHS Organization and the Operations Board for their work developing a system-wide long-range strategic plan to guide the effective deployment of these dollars. This announcement highlights a shared commitment to the ongoing success of our ferry system.”

“This is incredibly exciting news,” **said State Representative Louise Stutes (R-Kodiak)**. “This funding supports the crucial transportation system that is our Alaska Marine Highway. I and all Alaskans are grateful for all the work that Senators Murkowski and Sullivan have put into obtaining this funding for our state.”

“A huge thanks for the tireless, successful efforts put forward by Senators Murkowski and Sullivan on behalf of Alaska’s vitally important Marine Highway system,” **said State Representative Dan Ortiz (NA-Southern Southeast Alaska)**. “These investments in the main cog of Coastal Alaska’s transportation infrastructure will strengthen the statewide economy and help assure continued access to vital goods and services for coastal Alaskans.”

## **Project Announcements:**

- \$38 million through the Rural Ferry program to restore the health of the Alaska Marine Highway System for sustainable operations to rural communities. This award does not require a match by the State thanks to Senator Murkowski's advocacy with the Department of Transportation.
- \$92 million through the Rural Ferry program to support the replacement of the M/V Tustumena Vessel serving Southwest Alaska. With the \$23 million local match requirement, the total award amount is \$115.9 million.

**Background:**

This funding was made possible by H.R. 3684, the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), in which Senator Murkowski played a lead role writing and negotiating for Alaska. These awards are part of the IIJA's newly established [Ferry Service for Rural Communities Program](#)—Senator Murkowski's new program to provide competitive funding to states which will allow for basic essential ferry service in rural areas.

In January 2023, [Senator Murkowski announced \\$285 million for Alaska's ferry system](#). In July 2022, she announced an [historic \\$300 million](#) in funding being made available for ferries. This brings a total of \$716 million thus far to support the Alaska Marine Highway System. To date, Alaska has received over \$6 billion and counting in infrastructure investments as a result of the IIJA.

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