



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Transportation and  
Public Facilities

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER  
Rob Carpenter, Deputy Commissioner

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December 29, 2021

The Honorable Andrew Cremata  
Municipality of Skagway  
PO Box 415  
Skagway, AK 99840

The Honorable Douglas Olerud  
Haines Borough  
P.O. Box 1209  
Haines, AK 99827

Dear Mayor Cremata and Mayor Olerud:

Thank you for your recent letters regarding ferry service in Lynn Canal. A response was drafted to your first correspondence, but as you know things change quickly with AMHS and we withheld a response until we could fully ascertain the situation. The department began working on replacement sailings for Upper Lynn Canal almost immediately after getting the news about the Matanuska's additional steel work and subsequent delays from our vendors. As you stated, an extended time in the shipyard should not be unexpected given the age of the fleet, but while we strive to plan for contingencies, not all can be foreseen nor prevented.

AMHS staff had already planned on replacing the canceled Matanuska schedule with the extension of Kennicott and LeConte sailings. Regrettably we were not able to communicate our plan quickly enough to prevent the misperception that people would not have an option to move their reservation to a comparable sailing. However, with these extensions, service in Lynn Canal remained remarkably similar to what we had planned in our published winter schedule.

Regarding the Tazlina, it has been our intention all along to use the ship as a back-up vessel if necessary on capable and applicable routes. As you have seen from our recent press release we are working diligently to get the ship into service. Tazlina's Certificate of Inspection (COI) is valid until the end of April 2021, when the ship will go into the shipyard for scheduled overhaul. Steps to operational status include renewal of the Safety Management System (SMS) certification, remaining coast guard requirements, and most importantly, crewing up the ship.

It's important to share that AMHS staffing shortages have never been as significant as they are right now. AMHS has embarked on an aggressive recruiting effort and have brought on 30 additional unlicensed crew, but many more are needed.

To be clear, it is the intention of this administration, and the headquarters of DOT&PF/AMHS to improve system-wide reliability for the coastal communities served by AMHS. I would, however, ask for patience as these ships are very old and these are very challenging times.

Thank you again for reaching out, and please don't hesitate to forward any additional questions you may have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Carpenter".

Rob Carpenter  
Deputy Commissioner

cc: Robert Venables, Southeast Conference

*"Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure."*