

City and Borough of Sitka

100 Lincoln Street Sitka, Alaska 99835

Coast Guard City, USA

Captain John Falvey, Jr., General Manager

April 1, 2014

Alaska Marine Highway System

RE: F/W/S 2014-15 Marine Highway Schedule Comment

Dear Captain Falvey:

The proposed Fall/Winter/Spring Alaska Marine Highway schedule provides one (1) north and two (2) south stops to Sitka. This is the same Sitka schedule as previous years, despite Sitka's yearly request to add at least one more northbound stop to provide baseline service (at least two vessel each direction). Please provide a second north Sitka stop by rerouting the Friday Aurora sailing or a second northbound mainline to Sitka.

Each year AMHS declines to add a second weekly northbound sailing to Sitka. Some AMHS justification includes: 1) the FVF Fairweather is laid up to save money (this winter it will substitute for Chenega up north); 2) it is not feasible for Lynn Canal, which receives five (5) weekly sailings, to receive one less sailing which could then be re-routed to Sitka. Sitka's lack of service is not based on the unavailability of vessels. It is based on vessel deployment—including five-day-a-week service to Lynn Canal. Why will AMHS not provide a second northbound sailing to Sitka for more than half of each year? Sitka's requests for a second northbound vessel to Sitka have been consistently rejected, resulting in most school groups and other users generally unable to travel by ferry for seven+ months (the entire school year). Further, Summer service levels are available only in July and August but should begin in June.

In repeated resolutions to AMHS and MTAB, Sitka, current population 9,039, has requested parity of service with the rest of the region—a baseline service level of at least two (2) north and two (2) south vessels per week. This Winter Core Service level should be Southeast Alaska region's goal. Year-round service should include one Bellingham vessel, one Prince Rupert vessel, one village day boat, and four day FVF service. This service could provide consistent routes year round with additional service during the peak May-September season.

CBS requests AMHS and Department of Transportation detail the costs and benefits of a Baranof road to determine if a road across Baranof Island to a new ferry terminal could enable substantial improvements to AMHS while significantly increasing Sitka's level of service. Parity of service and a detailed analysis of road or other service improvements to address Sitka's concerns have been unsuccessfully requested for many years in the CBS Legislative Priorities. Thank you for your consideration and response.

Sincerely,

Mim McConnell, Mayor

Mark Gorman, Municipal Administrator

cc: Senator Stedman

Representative Kreiss-Tompkins

Providing for today ... preparing for tomorrow

**CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA
RESOLUTION NO. 2013-13**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE CITY AND BOROUGH OF SITKA REQUESTING
THE ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM MAINTAIN CORE SERVICE LEVELS, INCLUDING
ONE PRINCE RUPERT VESSEL YEAR-ROUND AND TWO VESSELS MAY THROUGH
SEPTEMBER**

WHEREAS, Southeast Alaska coastal communities without access to road systems have depended on the Alaska Marine Highway System for reliable, predictable primary marine transportation service since the creation of AMHS; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Marine Highway System transports the region's residents, visitors, food, health care, supplies, equipment, and seafoods, providing critically important transportation and commerce links within the Region and connections to the rest of Alaska and the lower 48; and

WHEREAS, the continued expansion of the Alaska Marine Highway System to provide new and expanding routes combined with the increasing costs and decreasing revenues available to operate the System are resulting in reduced core service levels in Southeast Alaska including the layup of the Taku through June, 2014, rather than operating this second Prince Rupert vessel during May and June when demand for a second Prince Rupert vessel is at a peak; and

WHEREAS, the seven-month Sitka Winter schedule has consisted for several years of only ONE northbound sailing and two southbounds per week; if the second Prince Rupert vessel is delayed until July, the single Rupert connection in May and June is grossly inadequate to serve Southeast Alaska.

WHEREAS, Sitka is grateful the Fairweather is being repowered this winter. Sitka will heavily use the fast vehicle ferry as soon as it comes out of overhaul to increase May service to Sitka, with full Summer service required by June 1, 2014;

WHEREAS, AMHS has better alternatives to reduce its budget by re-scheduling vessels that would not restrict core summer service so critical to the economies and citizens of Southeast Alaska;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Marine Highway System maintain its essential core service levels to Southeast Alaska with one Prince Rupert and one Bellingham vessel year round and a second Prince Rupert vessel throughout the entire summer season – May through September – and if required modify non-essential vessel schedules to reduce the AMHS budget; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka requests a consistent, sustainable core service schedule for Southeast Alaska be developed with input from the Marine Transportation Advisory Board, Southeast Conference, and the local communities which have the greatest stake in maintaining reliable AMHS service levels.

PASSED, APPROVED, AND ADOPTED by the Assembly of the City and Borough of Sitka, Alaska, on this 23rd day of July, 2013.



Pete Esquiro, Deputy Mayor

ATTEST:


Sara Peterson, CMC
Acting Municipal Clerk



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR STAN PARNELL

Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities

ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM
Office of the General Manager

1000 W. 22nd Avenue, Room 400
Anchorage, Alaska 99515-4000
Phone: 907-228-2200
Fax: 907-228-2201

3/12/2014

Dear Community Advisory Group Members:

It is time to begin the public review process for the next Alaska Marine Highway scheduling cycle. The proposed schedule patterns that will be reviewed will cover fall/winter/spring 2014-2015.

The schedule patterns that are being proposed are based on a funding level for FY15. The operating plan has been designed to meet the needs for community service, staying within available funding, and maintaining regulatory and safety standards for the vessels.

Please take the time to review and comment on this proposal paying particular attention to any need for special events scheduling. Be sure to give the name of the event, date, location, and arrival/departure times needed for each special event.

Please provide your written comments prior to April 05, 2014. Information may be faxed to 907-586-8365 or emailed to dot.amhs.comments@alaska.gov. A teleconference to hear comments and consider adjustments is scheduled for Tuesday, April 08, 2014 at 10:00 a.m. for Southeast schedules and at 1:30 p.m. for Southwest and Southcentral schedules. The meeting will be held in Ketchikan at the Alaska Marine Highway Central Office, 7559 North Tongass Highway for participants wishing to attend in person.

The toll free number to participate in both teleconferences is: 1-800-315-6338, conference code 3902#. The link to access the proposed schedule patterns is:

<http://www.dot.state.ak.us/amhs/share/schedule/considerations.pdf>.

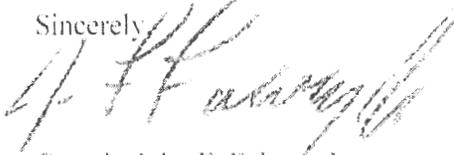
It is the policy of the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT & PF) that no person shall be excluded from participation in, or be denied benefits of any and all programs or activities we provide based on race, religion, color, gender, age, marital status, ability, or national origin, regardless of the funding source including Federal Transit Administration, Federal Aviation Administration, Federal Highway Administration and State of Alaska Funds.

The State of Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT & PF) complies with Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. Individuals with disabilities who may need auxiliary aids, services, and/or special modifications to participate in this public meeting should contact AMHS Operations Manager, Capt. Tony Karvelas at (907) 228-7252 and

TDD (907) 269-0743, TTY 1-800-770-8793, Alaska Relay, Voice: 7-1-1 or 1-800-770-8255 no later than April 02 to make any necessary arrangements.

If you have any additional questions or need additional information, please contact the AMHS Operations Manager, Captain Tony Karvelas, at (907) 228-7252.

Sincerely,



Captain John F. Falvey, Jr.
General Manager

JFF:gn

ENCLOSURES:

Draft FY15 Operating Plan 15.02
Calendars of Events
Weekly Vessel Pattern Graphs
FY15 Vessel Deployment Plan
Guide to Reading and using AMHS Scheduling Graphs

DISTRIBUTION:

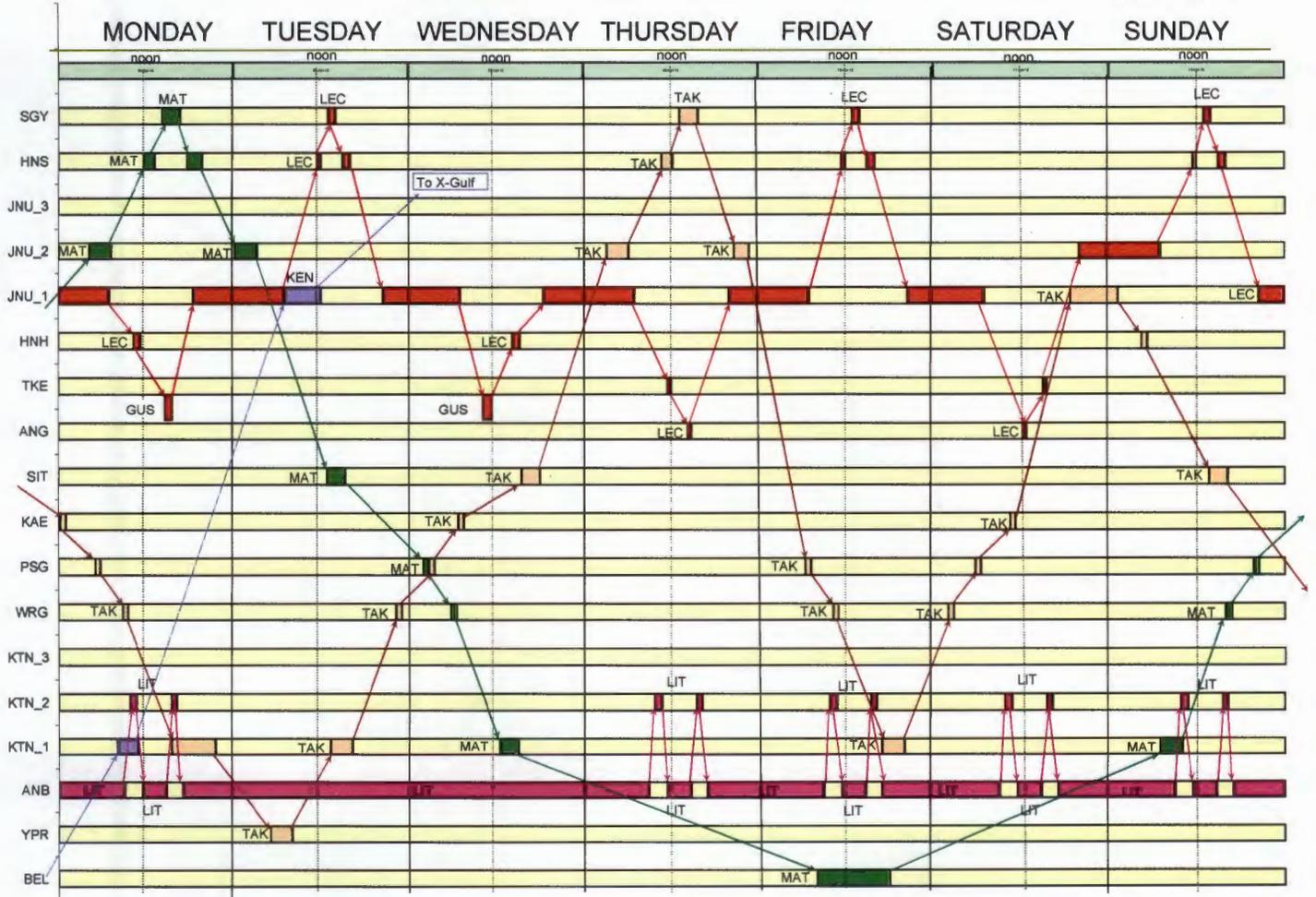
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Marine Transportation Advisory Board
Managers, AMHS Terminals
Masters, AMHS Vessels
Unions
IBU
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MEBA
Tlingit & Haida Central Council
S.E. Alaska Tribal Government Advisory Committee

DRAFT

Winter 2014-15 SE Mar-Apr

DRAFT

Revised 03-18-2014

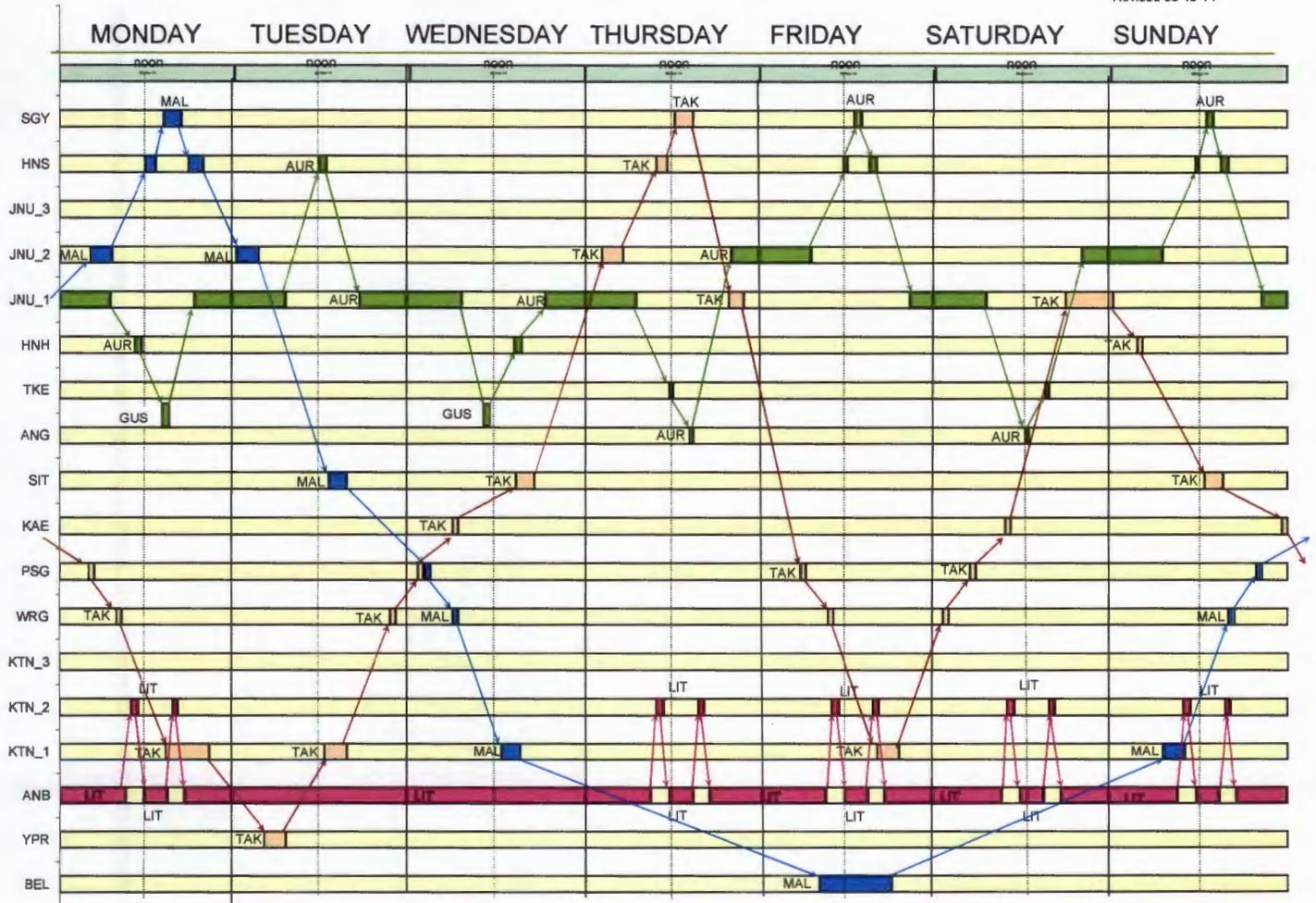


DRAFT

Winter 2014-15 SE Oct-Feb

DRAFT

Revised 03-18-14



**Alaska Marine Highway System
FY15 Vessel Deployment Plan
March 18, 2014**

Vessel Deployment – Winter 2014-15

- Kennicott will enter a Federal CIP project in October and will commence Bellingham Cross Gulf service in early March.
- Columbia will enter Layup status in October and will resume the Bellingham to Skagway service in early May.
- Matanuska will be in Layup status mid- September until entering Overhaul in early February. In late March she will pick up the Friday Bellingham route until early May when she resumes the Prince Rupert to Juneau route.
- Malaspina will run the Bellingham to Skagway route until entering overhaul in early March.
- Taku will sail the Prince Rupert to Juneau route until entering Overhaul in May.
- Lituya will sail between Annette Bay and Ketchikan until January when she enters a two week Overhaul period.
- LeConte will enter a Federal CIP project in mid-September and will resume the Northern Panhandle route in early March.
- Tustumena will sail SW until entering overhaul in early March. She will resume service in SW mid April. First chain scheduled for April 21.
- Aurora will sail in SE mid-September to cover the Northern Panhandle while LeConte is in Overhaul. Aurora will then enter Overhaul in March. She will resume service in PWS mid-April.
- Fairweather will be in Overhaul until mid-October and will then cover PWS until mid-April.
- Chenega will cover PWS until mid-October and will then enter a re-engine project until mid-May.

Dave Kensington
SE Conf. Transp Com 9/18/13

Core service

A scheduling concept developed by MTAB 10 years ago

- Consistent routes year round
- Additional service during peak season May through September

Year round

- One Bellingham vessel
- One Rupert vessel
- Village day boat
- 4 day FVF service

May through September additional service

- Lynn Canal day vessel
- Two Prince Rupert vessels
- 7 day week FVF service

Pros

- Runs that have been consistent have increased ridership
- All communities are connected with balanced service
- Travelers, school groups, community events can plan around service

Cons

- Current budget does not allow this level of service
- Vessels used by AMHS are either too expensive to operate or due to age require longer annual shipyard periods

What do we need to do

1. Short term: request AMHS and MTAB interact with their customers to understand our priorities
2. Long term: a realistic transportation plan that meets our needs and the budget