

**Alaska Mayor's and Chambers of Commerce
Joint Letter Concerning the Port of Alaska**

TO: The Honorable Pete Buttigieg,
US Department of Transportation
1200 New Jersey Ave, SE
Washington DC 20590

SUBJECT: Port Infrastructure Funding

Date: August 11, 2021

Dear Secretary Buttigieg,

We write to you today to request your personal assistance in securing \$750 Million from the forthcoming Bipartisan Infrastructure bill for critical repairs needed at the Port of Alaska.

The Port of Alaska is the primary port serving the economic, national defense, and emergency response and disaster recovery for the state. Originally built in the 1950's, the port began operations in 1961. The port serves five primary customer bases: general cargo, bulk petroleum, dry goods, cruise ships, and has a dry barge landing area.

A Port of Alaska Modernization Program began in 2016 to expand capabilities to meet current industry standards, but also to replace the aging infrastructure of the original dock area. Located along the Knik Arm, at the upper end of the Cook Inlet, the port experiences extreme tidal activity. This, combined with brackish water, high silt content, and the presence of a biological component common to northern latitudes has caused extensive corrosion and deteriorated the primary dock support poles. Current engineering assessment is that the damage to the wharf piles is severe and replacement is necessary within the next few years to avoid collapse of the dock area. The port has initiated design for replacement of the deteriorated dock support poles. However, project estimates exceed \$1.0 Billion, for which the Municipality of Anchorage is requesting this financial support through the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill currently being advanced through Congress.

Located in Southcentral Alaska, with both road and railroad connections to interior Alaska, as well as air cargo connections across the state and pipeline connections to Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, Ted Stevens International Airport, and the Marathon refinery in Nikiski, the Port of Alaska is the primary in-bound entry point for food, pharmaceuticals,

refined petroleum, and supplies for nearly eighty percent of the state's population. Twenty percent of this cargo is destined for the Department of Defense installations as well. With only about a five to seven days' supply of food in most Alaskan communities, any disruption to the port operations would have a devastating effect on the residents of the state and could quickly create a humanitarian crisis.

The Port of Alaska is one of seventeen commercial port's in America specifically identified in the National Port Readiness Network, providing national security support for the major force deployment of Alaskan based military forces. Alaska serves a strategic location for the deployment of military forces, especially in regard to the Indio-Pacific region. Maintaining a reliable port for rapid deployment of military forces is essential to our nation's security.

The Port of Alaska is also a strategic port for delivery of petroleum products to the state, which supports both surface transportation and military and commercial aviation fuel requirements. The Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport is one of the busiest air cargo facilities in the world, providing the most direct connections between North America and Asia. In the first quarter of this year, the airport ranked as the world's fourth busiest air cargo hub. The majority of aviation fuel provide to the airport comes through the Port of Alaska. Ensuring a consistent and reliable fuel supply to the airport is critical to the ability to support trade between the United States and Asian nations. Any interrupted delivery of petroleum products through the Port of Alaska would create a serious commerce disruption that would impact the entire nation.

Since the Port of Anchorage provides the primary entryway into Alaska for the majority of commodities used by the majority of Alaskans, it is imperative the port infrastructure be able to sustain any significant impacts associated with a potentially major earthquake, as well as the tremendous impacts of the currents and silty conditions of the Knik Arm, to remain operational. Additionally, the Port of Alaska has developed into a terminus for commercial passenger cruise operations, complimenting the cruise ship operations at both Whittier and Seward. Therefore, any degradation to the dock and pier area would have a significant impact on the tourist industry of Southcentral Alaska.

We recognize Alaska has numerous other port and dock infrastructure requirements across the state and we are continually working with both state and federal agencies to identify the necessary funds to complete these numerous repairs and improvements. However, the Port of Alaska is a statewide asset that serves the broader population, as well as other national interests. It is with that understanding that we have joined together in this letter to request your support in securing the necessary funds to repair the Port of Alaska before it experiences a catastrophic failure that would have statewide consequences.

The Alaska Congressional delegation supports expedited repairs to the Port of Alaska. Anchorage Mayor Bronson has briefed the delegation on the potential impacts to both the state and nation should the Port of Alaska have a catastrophic failure. By this letter, we are asking for your engagement in securing \$750 Million from within the \$17.0 Billion being set aside for Ports and Waterways in the Bipartisan Infrastructure bill.

We understand you may be visiting Alaska later this month. Should your schedule permit, we would encourage you to tour the Port of Alaska to see first-hand the deteriorating conditions of the dock and pier areas. Please contact Anchorage Mayor Dave Bronson direct if you have the opportunity to visit the port.

Thank you for your consideration of this request. We look forward to working with you to ensure the ports of Alaska continue serving the needs of our state and great nation.

Sincerely,

Mayor Dave Bronson
Municipality of Anchorage

Mayor Bryce Ward
Fairbanks North Star Borough

Mayor Jim Matherly
City of Fairbanks

Mayor Charlie Pearce
City of Kenai

Mayor John K. Handeland
City of Nome

Mayor Christy Terry
City of Seward

Mayor Ken Castner
City of Homer

Mayor Joe Vinatieri
City of Whittier

Mayor Sharon Scheidt
City of Valdez

Mayor Vern Halter
Matanuska-Susitna Borough

Mayor Glenda Ledford
City of Wasilla

Mayor Edna Devries
City of Palmer

Mayor Bill Roberts
Kodiak Island Borough

Mayor Patricia Branson
City of Kodiak

Mayor Vincent M. Tutiakoff
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Debbie Rinckey
Executive Director
Chugiak Eagle River Chamber of Commerce

Jenna Lowmaster
Executive Director
Kodiak Chamber of Commerce

Brad Anderson
Executive Director
Homer Chamber of Commerce

Sharon Anderson
Executive Director
Valdez Chamber of Commerce

Brittany Brown
Executive Director
Kenai Chamber of Commerce

Shanon Davis
Executive Director
Soldotna Chamber of Commerce

Marlene Fogarty-Phillips
Executive Director
North Pole Community Chamber of Commerce

Patty Wilbanks
Executive Director
Girdwood Chamber of Commerce