



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
The Secretary of Commerce
Washington, D.C. 20230

August 1, 2019

The Honorable Dan Sullivan
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Sullivan:

Thank you for your July 10, 2019 letter and our recent conversation regarding the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Ship *Fairweather*. I understand the importance of NOAA's programs and services to the State of Alaska and share your desire to co-locate the people and assets that provide them. I also recognize that the NOAA Ship *Fairweather* was required to move its operations to Newport, Oregon in recent years after the pier at 1010 Stedman Street, Ketchikan, AK was condemned as unsafe due to deterioration and disrepair.

At your office's request and as we have previously discussed, NOAA is reviewing options that would resolve the current homeporting challenges for NOAA Ship *Fairweather*. I expect the analysis to be completed later this year.

Additionally, NOAA continues to work with the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority and your office to supply studies and reports that will inform investment decisions. If the pier at 1010 Stedman Street, Ketchikan, AK is repaired to the required specifications and the necessary funding for shoreside facilities is provided, NOAA will return NOAA Ship *Fairweather* to the pier and use it as a permanent homeport (up to historical averages).

Finally, an agreement between NOAA and the United States Coast Guard (USCG) District 17 is nearing completion. That revised agreement would codify and expand NOAA's use of USCG Base Ketchikan to host NOAA Ship *Fairweather* up to historical averages. This could result in the consistent homeporting of the vessel in Ketchikan as soon as FY2020.

Thank you for your continued support of the Department of Commerce and NOAA. I look forward to working with you on this issue going forward. If you have any further questions, please contact Lawson Klutz, Associate Director for Legislative Affairs, at (202) 482-3663.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wilbur Ross".

Wilbur Ross