

RESOLUTION NO. _____

**IN SUPPORT OF RETAINING THE ALASKA MARINE HIGHWAY SYSTEM BETWEEN
BELLINGHAM AND ALASKA DESTINATIONS**

WHEREAS, the Alaska Marine Highway System ferry has been the only marine link between the contiguous 48 states and the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Port of Bellingham has been the southern terminus of the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) since 1989; and

WHEREAS, the Port built the Bellingham Cruise Terminal for \$10.3 million to handle ferry traffic; and

WHEREAS, AMHS provides essential services to many coastal Alaskan communities which have no surface highway access; and

WHEREAS, a large number of residents of coastal Alaskan communities use the AMHS to access the healthcare and urgent medical services in Bellingham and Seattle while air travel is either not available or prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, the loss of AMHS will impact many regional and cultural events such as SE Alaska State fair (Haines), Celebrations Juneau, and the Copper River Wild Salmon Festival Cordova, by limiting the participation of residents in these coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, the loss of AMHS will limit the opportunities for students to attend and compete in sporting events, leadership training and other school activities; and

WHEREAS, the loss of AMHS will result in less out of state tourism spending, impacting the local small businesses; and

WHEREAS, the AMHS has the same importance as other interstate highway systems in the lower 48 states for transportation and accessibility to other states and communities for residents of coastal Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the AMHS supports numerous direct and indirect family wage jobs not only in Bellingham but also in many coastal communities in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, small business owners of Alaska and Washington state will be affected most by the loss of the AMHS to transport their goods and equipment to and from Alaska to support business and commerce in Alaska and the Bellingham area; and.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Whatcom County Council, on this ____ day of _____ 2019, do hereby ask and authorize the Council Chair to write letters of support on behalf of residents of Whatcom County to the Governor of the State of Alaska, the Alaska State Assembly Speaker and the Alaska State Senate President for continuing year-round AMHS services

APPROVED this ____ day of _____, 2019.

ATTEST:

WHATCOM COUNTY COUNCIL
WHATCOM COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Dana Brown-Davis, Clerk of the Council

Rud Browne, Council Chair

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

Civil Deputy Prosecutor