

CITY OF UNALASKA  
UNALASKA, ALASKA

RESOLUTION 2023-43

A RESOLUTION OF THE UNALASKA CITY COUNCIL SUPPORTING FULL FUNDING FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA MUNICIPAL HARBOR FACILITY GRANT PROGRAM IN THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 STATE CAPITAL BUDGET IN THE AMOUNT OF \$7,644,677

WHEREAS, the majority of the public boat harbors in Alaska were constructed by the State during the 1960s and 1970s; and

WHEREAS, these harbor facilities represent critical transportation links and are the transportation hubs for waterfront commerce and economic development in Alaskan coastal communities; and

WHEREAS, the harbor facilities in Alaska are ports of refuge for ocean going vessels, and serve as essential transportation hubs to coastal Alaskan communities for supplies, trade in goods and services and connections to the world market for our exports and imports; and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska over the past nearly 30 years has transferred ownership of most of these State-owned harbors, many of which were at or near the end of their service life at the time of transfer, to local municipalities; and

WHEREAS, the municipalities took over this important responsibility even though they knew that these same harbor facilities were in poor condition at the time of transfer due to the state's failure to keep up with deferred maintenance; and

WHEREAS, consequently, when local municipal harbormasters formulated their annual harbor facility budgets, they inherited a major financial burden that their local municipal governments could not afford; and

WHEREAS, in response to this financial burden, the Governor and the Alaska Legislature passed legislation in 2006, supported by the Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators, to create the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant program (AS 29.60.800); and

WHEREAS, the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities utilizes a beneficial administrative process to review, score and rank applicants to the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program, since state funds may be limited; and

WHEREAS, for each harbor facility grant application, these municipalities have committed to invest 100% of the design and permitting costs and 50% of the construction cost; and

WHEREAS, the municipalities of the Sitka and Juneau have committed to contribute half of their project cost in local match funding for FY2025 towards harbor projects of significant importance locally as required in the Harbor Facility Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, completion of these harbor facility projects is dependent on the 50% match from the State of Alaska's Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program; and

WHEREAS, during the last fifteen years the Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program has only been fully funded twice; and

WHEREAS, a survey done by the Alaska Municipal League of Alaska's ports and harbors found that from the respondents, the backlog of projects necessary to repair and replace former State-owned harbors has increased to at least \$500,000,000; and

WHEREAS, given that Alaska is a maritime state and that our harbors are foundational to both our way of life and the economy of this great State it is in the public's best interest to maintain this critical infrastructure by using State, Local and Federal funds to recapitalize the crucial harbor moorage infrastructure statewide.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Unalaska City Council urges full funding by the Governor and the Alaska Legislature for the State of Alaska's Municipal Harbor Facility Grant Program in the FY 2025 State Capital Budget in order to ensure enhanced safety and economic prosperity among Alaskan coastal communities.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by a duly constituted quorum of the Unalaska City Council on October 24, 2023.

  
Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr.  
Mayor

ATTEST:

  
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Estkarien P. Magdaong  
City Clerk



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## MEMORANDUM TO COUNCIL

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To: Mayor and City Council Members  
From: Peggy McLaughlin, Port Director  
Through: Bil Homka, City Manager  
Date: October 24, 2023  
Re: Resolution 2023-43: A resolution supporting full funding from the State of Alaska for the Harbor Facility Grant Program in the FY25 State Capital Budget

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**SUMMARY:** This Resolution is a resolution of support. The Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators (AAHPA) is soliciting support from the councils and assemblies of their municipal membership to accompany the AAHPA's request to the Alaska State Legislature to continue funding the Harbor Facilities Grant Program. This program is not only vital to provide necessary services to mariners, but also has a cascading benefit for the economy through construction services and also revenue streams for municipalities through harbor facility enhancements. This resolution, if passed, will become part of the packet of support provided to the Alaska State Legislature.

**PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION:** A Resolution of Support for the Harbor Facilities Grant Program is regularly requested from the City of Unalaska City Council.

**BACKGROUND:** In 2006, the State of Alaska established the Harbor Facility Grant Program to help fund the maintenance and replacement of aging harbor facilities, with an emphasis on facilities that were turned over to municipalities by the State.

**DISCUSSION:** The Harbor Facility Grant Program was established to support municipalities with repair, maintenance and replacement of aging harbor facilities. The harbor facilities that take priority are the facilities that were previously owned by the State of Alaska, but were turned over to municipalities. However, all harbor facilities are eligible to apply to this program.

This grant program represents no less than a 100% match to the State's contribution or 50% of the project and the municipality must fund all design and permitting, as well as uplands development. This program has been instrumental to the economic development of the State by providing safe and secure mooring locations for mariners that navigate in and around some 33,000 miles of coastline.

Unalaska benefited from this program in 2015 through the State contribution of \$1,570,000 for the replacement of the Discovery Float at Robert Storrs Harbor.

The Port has the potential opportunity to receive funding for this grant program in the future for the replacement and upgrades to Robert Storrs A and B Floats.

This program has allowed communities to build revenue streams through the development of harbor facilities which, without the State's contribution, would have been abandoned or demolished.

By passing this resolution, the City of Unalaska will be supporting not only the Harbor Facility Grant Program, but all other coastal communities that provide mariners, maritime industries and the State of Alaska with vital services.

The Alaska Association of Harbormasters and Port Administrators stands unified in seeking ongoing funding from the State of Alaska through this program, and we are asking our local councils and assemblies to support the Association in its endeavors to receive funding for this necessary infrastructure.

**ALTERNATIVES:**

- 1) Council could fully support Resolution 2023-43; or
- 2) Council could choose to not support Resolution 2023-43 as written; or
- 3) Council could offer up another Resolution.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:** This Resolution implies no financial obligation to the City of Unalaska.

**LEGAL:** Not Applicable

**STAFF RECOMMENDATION:** Staff recommends approving this Resolution.

**PROPOSED MOTION:** I move to adopt Resolution 2023-43.

**CITY MANAGER COMMENTS:** I recommend approving this resolution as a show of support for the many necessary harbor improvement projects around the State, including those in Unalaska.