

Legislature Passes Austerman Resolution for New Alaska-Based Cutter

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

On Saturday, the state Legislature passed Representative Alan Austerman's bill to request a next-generation Coast Guard cutter be homeported in Alaska.

The resolution will be forwarded to Washington D.C. urging construction of more "Legend-Class National Security Cutters" and designating one for Kodiak.

Austerman said as the world's attention turns toward the arctic, that it's more important than ever to base a National Security Cutter here.

Though Coast Guard Base Kodiak is the largest in the nation and closest to the Arctic, Austerman pointed out that it's still more than 1,000 miles away from the Chukchi Sea, and also encouraged the federal government to increase maritime presence in northern waters.

So far, the Department of Homeland Security has completed acquisition of five NSC vessels, three of which are in service out of California, while a fourth is under construction and a contract has been awarded for a fifth vessel. The original plan was to build eight of the 418-foot ships, though no contracts exist for construction of the last three.