

Aleutians East Borough Weighs in on Ferry Crisis

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Though Kodiak has been inconvenienced by the delayed return of the state ferry Tustumena this summer, the city has at least had regular — if infrequent — visits by the ferry Kennicott. Other communities on the Tustumena's schedule, which only get ferry service in the summer months, haven't seen a ferry since May. Some communities that don't have the facilities to handle the 100-foot longer Kennicott haven't had service since last October.

The lack of service or a suitable ferry to call on many communities prompted the Aleutians East Borough Assembly to pass a resolution on Friday requesting the governor and legislature move ahead with construction of a new replacement ferry for the Tusty.

The lack of service, the resolution points out, has forced residents of the borough to depend on far more expensive air charters for their travel.

The resolution, signed by Mayor Stanley Mack, points out that while a replacement would likely cost \$100-million, there is "less than half that amount" in the state's vessel replacement fund. It asks that the Tusty replacement as well as the two "Alaska Class" day-ferries for Southeast be fully funded in next year's budget.