



Alaska Wildland
Adventures

The Honorable Dan Sullivan

United States Senate

510 L Street

Suite 750

Anchorage, AK 99501

***RE: TIMELY REPAIRS NEEDED FOR CRITICAL SEWARD, ALASKA MARITIME
INFRASTRUCTURE BY NATIONAL DATA BUOY CENTER (NDBC) AND NATIONAL
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION (NOAA) – PILOT ROCK AND
BUOY 76***

Dear Senator Sullivan,

Thank you for your steadfast support for past and current travel and tourism industry projects and issues. I bring to your attention a matter that represents a severe safety concern for commercial and private boaters navigating in and around Seward, Alaska during the very busy summer season. Time is of the essence for necessary repairs so that weather data can be transmitted to support the well-being of passengers, freight, and vessels.

Two sources of current and trending weather conditions that are of critical importance for the Seward, Alaska area were damaged by winter storms in January, or perhaps earlier. These include the Pilot Rock Station located on the small Pilot Rock outcropping at the head of Resurrection Bay (PILA2 Station) and the open ocean Buoy 76 in Cape Clear (Buoy 46076 in Cape Clear).

In contacting the NDBC, who is responsible for the upkeep and repairs of these stations, we learned that Bouy 76 ***might*** be able to be serviced in May. There is no assurance that this will be scheduled. It was also indicated that Pilot Rock will likely not be serviced until fall of 2026 at the earliest, due to the lapse in funding to the US Coast

Guard. Apparently Pilot Rock requires Coast Guard helicopter support. This would be **after** the busy summer season.

Both weather stations are critical to Seward's fleet of commercial and private boaters. They serve a uniquely critical role in maritime safety and operational decision making for Resurrection Bay and the Gulf of Alaska approaches to Seward. This is an area of high vessel traffic and extremely limited alternate observational coverage. The local geography, sometimes sudden and unexpected glacier-influenced winds (katabatic), and rapidly changing offshore conditions all create a dynamic environment where conditions at the harbor can differ dramatically from offshore waters. Observing current and trending conditions are essential for marine safety in and around the area.

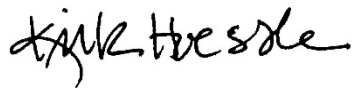
These stations directly support Tour Operators in and around Kenai Fjords National Park, the vast fishing fleets, approximately 90 cruise ships that call each summer, fuel and supply barges essential to local communities and logistics, and countless private boat owners that fish and cruise in the area.

Unlike many lower-latitude and more densely instrumented coastal regions, this part of Alaska has sparse observational coverage. There are no other stations nearby to adequately represent offshore conditions south of Seward due to terrain shielding and localized wind effects. For example, Pilot Rock is not just one of many stations, it is THE ONLY offshore reference point for a vast area.

I learned of the situation just a couple days ago, along with the rest of the Seward marine community. I am sending this letter as an urgent request for action to be taken to assist in securing the funding and the action plan necessary for these two stations to be up and running effectively by mid to late May at the latest. As needed, I can assist in getting a multitude of Seward area endorsements to this request.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Kirk Hoessle". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kirk" being more prominent than the last name "Hoessle".

Kirk Hoessle, President

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