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29 Jul 2026

The Honorable Kristen McDonald
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative McDonald,

This letter is in response to your correspondence dated July 15, 2026. I agree on the importance of the Coast Guard's ability to support the Great Lakes' essential marine transportation system and I appreciate your continued support. The Coast Guard takes its congressional obligations seriously, including those under the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2026 and prior authorizations, and provides the following updates.

The Coast Guard's Report on the Great Lakes Icebreaker (Homeland Security Cutter – Heavy Icebreaker): Design and Construction Strategy is currently under executive review for clearance. Appropriations in Fiscal Year 2024 provided \$20 million to begin the Analyze & Select Phase of the acquisition. In Fiscal Year 2025, the Department of Homeland Security transmitted an updated spend plan to Congress that re-allocated \$35 million of appropriated funding to complete Analyze & Select Phase activities, which will result in refined cost assessments, and inform the Coast Guard's future budget requests. The \$25 million appropriated in Fiscal Year 2026 will further advance the acquisition.

The Coast Guard's Report on the Bay Class Icebreaking Tug Fleet Replacement is currently in draft form, undergoing internal review. The acquisition of the Homeland Security Cutter – Medium domestic icebreaker, designed to replace the Bay Class icebreaking tugs, is also progressing. Contract design work is projected for completion in early 2027 and a Request for Proposals is anticipated shortly thereafter.

The Coast Guard understands that the database requirement in Section 11213 of the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 is complete. In response to a related 2024 Government Accountability Office recommendation that the Coast Guard report more complete performance information to Congress on its domestic icebreaking operations, the Coast Guard developed and implemented four new performance measures using existing internally collected data. Additional information is provided in the July 2024 Congressional Report titled "Domestic Icebreaking Operations." This effort addresses reporting and transparency concerns using Coast Guard-held operational data, including icebreaker tasking, response times, and Automatic Identification System (AIS) vessel tracking. These reports were previously made available on the Homeport website and will transition to the Navigation Center (NAVCEN) website beginning with the upcoming ice season in winter 2026.

The Coast Guard remains fully committed to a mission-capable Great Lakes icebreaking fleet and sustaining safe, year-round marine transportation the Nation's economy and communities depend on. We appreciate your continued support for these priorities and welcome the opportunity to keep your office informed as these efforts mature.

The Coast Guard House Liaison Office at (202) 225-4775 would be pleased to respond to any further questions you or your staff may have.

Sincerely,



K. E. LUNDAY
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant