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Department of Transportation
and Public Facilities

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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COVID-19 Crisis Delays Return of Three AMHS Ships

Mid-May return tentatively planned for Columbia, Kennicott and Tustumena

(JUNEAU, Alaska) – The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) vessels, *M/V Columbia*, *M/V Kennicott*, and *M/V Tustumena* were scheduled to leave the Ketchikan Shipyard and resume service in mid-April and early May 2020. For the safety of AMHS employees and to reduce the potential spread of COVID-19 at the Ketchikan Shipyard, AMHS reduced shipboard crew levels on March 25, 2020, to the minimum necessary to safely care for assets. (The details of that decision are available in a [previous press release](#).)

Vigor Ketchikan Shipyard expects to complete overhaul work for the *Columbia*, *Kennicott*, and *Tustumena* on schedule, however, additional AMHS crew must first return to Ketchikan to provision the vessels and complete practice drills for required safety certifications before service can resume. Given the current protocols in place, that is not feasible at this time. As a result, the *Columbia*, *Kennicott*, and *Tustumena* will not return to service as previously scheduled. AMHS tentatively plans for the vessels to resume service in mid-May. All passengers are being notified and rebooked or refunded as necessary.

Emergency orders implementing travel restrictions have been issued by the communities of Angoon and Hoonah and traffic demand for those communities is greatly diminished. As a result, AMHS is reducing service levels for Angoon and Hoonah to provide essential grocery deliveries until the public health crisis has abated.

The Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) is extending its policy waiving cancellation fees for any reservation until May 1, 2020. To cancel or make changes to an itinerary you can contact the AMHS reservation call center at 1-800-642-0066 or call your local AMHS terminal.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities oversees 239 airports, 10 ferries serving 35 communities, more than 5,600 miles of highway and 776 public facilities throughout the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to “**Keep Alaska Moving** through service and infrastructure.”