



**TESTIMONY BEFORE U.S. SENATE HOMELAND SECURITY APPROPRIATIONS  
SUB-COMMITTEE HEARING IN KODIAK, ALASKA**

August 6, 2012

Good morning and thank you for allowing me to speak with you this morning. My name is Bruce Harland and I am the Vice President of Contract Services for Crowley Marine Services, a company that has been operating in the Alaskan Arctic continuously since 1957. I am also here as a representative of the American Waterways Operators and its member companies that supply valuable transportation services to Alaskans.

**The Arctic Region in Alaska**

In preparation for this meeting, the members first agreed on our definition of the Alaskan Arctic as the region West and North of Unimak Pass. This area is characterized by extreme weather events, changing and unpredictable ice conditions from year to year, draft limitations and above all a remote region where assistance could be many hours or days away. AWO member companies have worked within these limitations to develop a safe, efficient and cost effective system to provide transportation and fuel delivery services to villages and business in the region. The tools we have developed include lightering fleets to deliver supplies in shallow waters, operating materials such as float hoses to deliver to inland tanks, spill response plans, landing craft for where no docks exist, procedures to be followed which capture best practices and above all experienced professional mariners who have an intimate knowledge of the region.

**Strategies to Address Changing Climatic Conditions**

Over the last five years we have witnessed a dramatic change in the arctic with reduced but still unpredictable ice conditions, increased interest in resource development in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS), adventure tourism and talk of new polar shipping routes. The USCG is now developing strategies to respond to this change and the AWO member companies would propose these areas of focus.

- Accurate charting and hydrographic information. Most areas in the region have no up to date charts. Increased use of electronic charting and aids to navigation embedded into electronic charts would be a significant improvement. The navigable rivers and bays are especially critical for safe navigation.
- Increased AIS coverage in the area to identify other vessels for security, collision avoidance, and potential assistance.
- Vessel traffic system for Unimak Pass and Bering Straits to improve safe passage.
- More accurate weather and tide information for the region.
- Improved Search and Rescue capabilities and incident response in the region. This could be with a combination of new assets and facilities in the region.

- Improved ice breaking capabilities. This would again provide Search and Rescue capabilities, security for the region and could potentially extend the marine season by opening up the ice for shipping during the shoulder seasons.
- Deepwater Arctic Port. This is currently being investigated by the State and the Army Corps and could be utilized as a forward deployment point for the USCG.

## **Conclusion**

We would like to leave you with a final thought; AWO members have been safely operating in the region for many years and in conjunction with both the USCG and State of Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation have developed effective systems for the safe transportation of cargo and bulk fuels vital to the health and development of the local cities and villages in Alaska. Significant regulatory changes that would alter this transportation system could have a devastating impact on the fragile economic health of the region already suffering from the high cost of basic necessities such as heating fuel.