

LISA MURKOWSKI
ALASKA

COMMITTEES:
ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES
RANKING MEMBER
APPROPRIATIONS
HEALTH, EDUCATION, LABOR,
AND PENSIONS
INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510-0203
(202) 224-6665
(202) 224-5301 FAX

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510 L STREET, SUITE 600
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501-1956
(907) 271-3735

101 12TH AVENUE, ROOM 329
FAIRBANKS, AK 99701-6278
(907) 456-0233

805 FRONTAGE ROAD, SUITE 105
KENAI, AK 99611-9104
(907) 283-5808

4079 TONGASS AVENUE, SUITE 204
KETCHIKAN, AK 99901-5526
(907) 225-6880

851 EAST WESTPOINT DRIVE, SUITE 307
WASILLA, AK 99654-7142
(907) 376-7665

Honorable Ray Mabus
Secretary of the Navy
The Pentagon, Room 4E686
Washington, DC 20350

Dear Secretary Mabus:

I understand that the Navy intends to commission the USS Anchorage (LPD 23) in late 2012. I cannot think of a better place to commission this exciting new vessel than the city for which it is named – Anchorage, Alaska.

Alaskan hospitality is legendary. It is well known throughout the Armed Forces that no people support our men and women in uniform more enthusiastically than the people of Alaska. For generations many who came to Alaska to serve have chosen to make Alaska their permanent residence. Our state hosts more veterans per capita than any other state in the union. Our Alaska communities are some of the most civic minded in the country. Current data from the Corporation for National and Community Service ranks Alaska ninth in the Nation for volunteerism and second in the Nation when it comes to the number of hours that each of our volunteers devote to community service. These factors lead me to conclude that the people of Alaska will go all out to make the commissioning of the USS Anchorage a truly memorable event.

The Port of Anchorage, which is one of our Nation's strategic ports, is fully prepared to host the commissioning ceremony. In August 2011, the Port of Anchorage celebrated its 50th anniversary as the hub of waterborne commerce in Alaska. I understand that it was deemed suitable to host the commissioning ceremony following a recent site visit.

Finally, the commissioning ceremony presents the Navy with an important opportunity to reintroduce itself to the people of Alaska. We have missed the Navy's year round presence in our State since the closure of naval facilities in Adak. Yet we remain hopeful that we will be able to welcome the Navy back to Alaska as the US presence in the Arctic develops.

On behalf of my constituents I would like you to know that Alaska would be thrilled to host the commissioning of the USS Anchorage and I pledge to do all that I can to help make for a successful event. If I can be of any further assistance in your deliberations, please do not hesitate to let me know.

Cordially,



Lisa Murkowski
United States Senator