



Bering Sea and Arctic Region Coverage

March 11, 2016

Fiscal Year 2016 Report to Congress



Homeland
Security

United States Coast Guard

Foreword

March 11, 2016

I am pleased to present the following report, “Bering Sea and Arctic Region Coverage,” which has been prepared by the U.S. Coast Guard.

The Joint Explanatory Statement and Senate Report 114-68 accompanying the *Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act* (P. L. 114-113) direct the submission of the Coast Guard’s plans to ensure that at least one cutter capable of operating in and patrolling the Bering Sea and Arctic Region maintains a presence in the Bering Sea and Arctic Region at all times.



Pursuant to congressional requirements, this report is being provided to the following Members of Congress:

The Honorable John R. Carter
Chairman, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Lucille Roybal-Allard
Ranking Member, House Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security

The Honorable Jeanne Shaheen
Ranking Member, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Homeland Security.

I am happy to answer any further questions you may have. Please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 372-4411 or the Department’s Deputy Under Secretary for Management and Chief Financial Officer, Mr. Chip Fulghum, at (202) 447-5751.

Sincerely,

Paul F. Zukunft
Admiral, U.S. Coast Guard
Commandant



Bering Sea and Arctic Region Coverage

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I. Legislative Language

This report responds to the language set forth in the Joint Explanatory Statement and in Senate Report 114-68, accompanying the *Fiscal Year 2016 Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act* (P.L. 114-113), as per the following:

The Joint Explanatory Statement states:

BERING SEA COVERAGE

Not later than 60 days after the date of enactment of this Act, the Commandant is required to submit to Congress a report on the plans of the Coast Guard to ensure at least one mission-capable cutter maintains a presence in the Bering Sea and Arctic Region at all times during the 10-year period beginning on the date of such submittal, as described in the Senate report.

Senate Report 114-68 states:

BERING SEA COVERAGE

The Committee is concerned that adequate cutter coverage in the Bering Sea and Arctic Region will become increasingly difficult to achieve as the medium endurance cutter Alex Haley and high endurance cutter Munro have both exceeded 40 years of service life under extremely demanding conditions.

Not later than 60 days after the date on enactment of this act, the Secretary shall submit to Congress a report on the plans of the Coast Guard to ensure that at least one cutter capable of operating in and patrolling the Bering Sea and Arctic Region maintains a presence in the Bering Sea and Arctic Region at all times during the 10-year period beginning on the date of such submittal. This report shall include the following:

- (1) For each cutter of the Coast Guard involved in patrolling the Bering Sea and Arctic Region on the day before the date of enactment of this act that the Secretary considers a legacy cutter, the date on which the Secretary expects to decommission the cutter;
- (2) For each cutter described in (1), the date on which the Secretary expects to replace the cutter;
- (3) The Committee expects the replacement cutters to meet or exceed the current capabilities of the legacy assets, keeping in mind the growing presence of China and Russia; and

(4) The Coast Guard's plan to ensure there are no gaps in coverage during this 10-year period.

II. Report

The Coast Guard is committed to its presence in the Bering Sea and Arctic Region, demonstrated by a historically maintained 1.0 major cutter coverage in the Bering Sea. The Coast Guard’s ability to maintain 1.0 coverage in the region depends on the recapitalization schedule for legacy assets, specifically the acquisition schedule for the Offshore Patrol Cutter.

During the period of fleet recapitalization, any projected gaps in asset availability will be addressed during the Coast Guard’s annual Standard Operational Planning Process (SOPP). The SOPP utilizes risk-informed decision making at the strategic and operational levels to support force allocation recommendations. Through this process, the Coast Guard will ensure that appropriate forces are allocated to provide coverage in the Bering Sea.

Table 1: Cutters Capable of Patrolling the Bering Sea & Arctic Region

Cutter	Class	Comm	Decom
BOUTWELL	WHEC*	FY 1968	FY 2016
MORGENTHAU	WHEC*	FY 1969	FY 2017
MELLON	WHEC*	FY 1967	FY 2018
SHERMAN	WHEC*	FY 1968	FY 2019
MIDGETT	WHEC*	FY 1971	FY 2021
MUNRO	WHEC*	FY 1972	FY 2022
ALEX HALEY	WMEC*	FY 1971	FY 2023
BERTHOLF	WMSL	FY 2008	N/A
WAESCHE	WMSL	FY 2010	N/A
STRATTON	WMSL	FY 2012	N/A
HAMILTON	WMSL	FY 2014	N/A
JAMES	WMSL	FY 2015	N/A
MUNRO	WMSL	FY 2017	N/A
KIMBALL	WMSL	FY 2018	N/A
MIDGETT	WMSL	FY 2019	N/A
NSC #9	WMSL	TBD	N/A
OPCs	WMSM	TBD	N/A

* Legacy Cutter