



PRESS RELEASE

AIDEA Office of Communications & External Affairs
907.771.3000
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JAG Ketchikan Secures \$99.6 Million NOAA Contract, Builds Momentum at Ketchikan Shipyard

Anchorage, Alaska — JAG Ketchikan LLC has been awarded a \$99.6 million federal contract by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration for the NOAA Ship Henry B. Bigelow Modernization and Revitalization Program, marking a significant milestone for JAG Marine Group and reinforcing Alaska’s growing role in supporting federal maritime operations. The contract began June 10, 2026, and extends through April 14, 2029.

The award represents a major expansion of multiyear federal vessel modernization work supporting Alaska’s maritime industrial base. The Henry B. Bigelow project adds substantial federal backlog at a time when JAG Marine Group continues ramping up activity connected to the Ketchikan Shipyard, an AIDEA-owned facility that has long served as a critical industrial asset for Southeast Alaska. In correspondence regarding the award, JAG Marine Group President Doug Huff described it as “another \$90+ million of backlog for Ketchikan.”

The NOAA Ship Henry B. Bigelow Midlife Extension Program is expected to support continued workforce growth and operational expansion at the shipyard. Since JAG Marine Group assumed operations, employment at the Ketchikan Shipyard has increased substantially, rising from roughly 15 workers at the time of transition to approximately 150 workers. Employment levels are expected to continue increasing as additional contracts are secured, supporting further hiring and expansion of the shipyard’s workforce.

The scale and complexity of the Henry B. Bigelow modernization is expected to drive additional demand for skilled maritime labor, including core trades and specialized engineering, electrical, mechanical and fabrication expertise. The federal project also is expected to support more stable year-round employment by adding long-duration vessel modernization work beyond seasonal Alaska Marine Highway System maintenance cycles.

“This contract is a clear win for Alaska,” said **Governor Mike Dunleavy**. “It means more jobs, more skilled trades, and more steady work at the Ketchikan Shipyard. We’ve said all along that Alaska needs to leverage its infrastructure and workforce to compete for large federal projects, and this award shows that strategy is working. Growing the shipyard strengthens Southeast Alaska’s economy and positions our state as a serious player in federal and commercial maritime work.”

“This contract is another clear vote of confidence in our maritime workforce, the growing capabilities of the Ketchikan Shipyard, and a great homegrown company—JAG,” **Senator Murkowski said**. “This announcement comes after years of effort to strengthen Alaska’s maritime industrial base and ensure our state is well-positioned to compete for major federal vessel maintenance and modernization projects. It also reinforces Alaska’s role as a strategic hub for ship repair and maintenance as we continue to rebuild our nation’s maritime capacity.”

“Alaska’s growing maritime manufacturing base is both a major economic asset and a national security imperative—particularly as we work to significantly expand Alaska’s Coast Guard presence and operations in our coastal communities,” **Senator Sullivan said**. “Securing critical federal partnerships, like this NOAA contract for the AIDEA-owned shipyard and JAG Ketchikan, helps grow our skilled workforce, expand domestic shipbuilding and repair capacity, and ensure more Coast Guard and other critical vessels can be maintained and modernized here at home. Projects like this create good-paying jobs for Alaskans and reinforce Alaska’s position as a strategic hub for maritime operations in the Pacific and the Arctic.”

“This nearly \$100 million NOAA contract is a significant investment in both the future of this facility and Alaska’s role in supporting America’s maritime infrastructure,” **said Congressman Nick Begich**. “The modernization of the NOAA Ship Henry B. Bigelow is a high-value project that will improve the vessel’s capabilities while supporting continued growth at the Ketchikan Shipyard. Just as importantly, this award demonstrates that Alaska can compete for and win major federal maritime projects. Every contract secured by the Ketchikan Shipyard brings new investment into our state, supports skilled jobs, expands industrial capability, and strengthens our position as a strategic hub for vessel modernization, repair, and fabrication. This is exactly the kind of economic growth and long-term investment that creates opportunity for Southeast Alaska and a strong future for our state.”

Doug Huff added, “JAG Marine Group (JMG) is encouraged by the continued faith the NOAA team has placed in the JMG. NOAA plays an important and significant role in maritime commerce, port safety, nautical charting, research, and fishing and resource management. The investment being made in the NOAA vessels will allow them to fulfill

their responsibilities well into the future. JMG is pleased to play a small role in advancing NOAA's mission.

This award will positively impact the Shipyard, our Employees, the State of Alaska, the City and Borough of Ketchikan, through continued growth in the economic activity of the region. JMG specifically appreciates our Employees and Partners for their support in making this "win" possible.

We appreciate the working relationship that JMG has developed with AIDEA, the AIDEA Board, and specifically the efforts of Randy Ruaro the Executive Director to expand the Maritime Capabilities at Ketchikan and throughout the State of Alaska."

"By working together, JAG and AIDEA are securing the future of Ketchikan's shipyard. This upcoming expansion means more local jobs, a stronger economy, and a promising future for our community's working families," **said Senator Bert Stedman.**

"This contract is welcome news for Ketchikan and for the skilled men and women who make the shipyard such an important part of our local economy," **said Bob Sivertsen, Ketchikan Mayor.** "The continued growth of work at the Ketchikan Shipyard means more family-supporting jobs, more opportunities for young people to enter the trades, and a stronger economic foundation for our community and Southeast Alaska. The shipyard as an economic driver that is poised for growth within our community. This contract is just an example of opportunity that lies ahead Ketchikan."

"A contract of this scale has the potential to create meaningful opportunities for students, apprentices and workers across the region," **said Charles Edwardson, Director - POW Campus.** "As construction activity and shipyard operations continue to grow in Ketchikan, projects like the *Henry B. Bigelow* modernization can help strengthen the connection between classroom training and hands-on careers in welding, fabrication, electrical, mechanical and other skilled trades. For our campus and our workforce partners, this kind of long-term investment supports a stronger pipeline of local talent and helps prepare Southeast Alaskans for good-paying jobs close to home. As the Director at Generations Southeast, an Alaska regional Vocational Training center, we are happy to be part of the team and will join in the effort to provide specific shipyard competencies training, designed for the specific needs of Jags workforce at the Ketchikan shipyard."

"Much appreciation goes to Randy Ruaro for the hard work that was done to help bring JAG to Ketchikan as the operator of the shipyard," **said Department of Commerce, Community, and Economic Development Commissioner Julie Sande.** "The improvement there has been tremendous. As a community member, I see it firsthand when I drive past the shipyard parking lot. The progress is clear: what had been an underutilized and underperforming state asset is now showing visible momentum. The shipyard is not only Ketchikan's Shipyard; it is an asset for the entire state of Alaska, and it is so encouraging to continue hearing good news from JAG."

The Henry B. Bigelow modernization further reinforces the shipyard's growing role as a strategic asset supporting federal, commercial and state maritime needs. As JAG Marine Group continues to diversify its project portfolio, the addition of large-scale federal vessel

work strengthens the case for expanded shipyard utilization, increased capacity and long-term investment in Alaska's maritime industrial infrastructure.

Looking ahead, Alaska has the opportunity to build a statewide maritime economy that mirrors the transformational impact that the Ted Stevens Anchorage International Airport has had in making the state a global leader in cargo aircraft landings. With strategic assets such as the Ketchikan Shipyard, Alaska can strengthen its position as a hub for vessel repair, modernization, fabrication and logistics serving federal, commercial and Arctic maritime operations. AIDEA's role as a long-term infrastructure partner can help align investment, workforce development and industrial capacity, so Alaska captures more of the economic activity generated by its location, resources and growing maritime demand. By advancing projects that expand capacity and create stable, skilled jobs, AIDEA can help position Alaska's maritime sector as a major driver of statewide economic growth for decades to come.

About AIDEA:

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) is an independently governed public corporation of the State of Alaska established by the Legislature in 1967 to promote, develop, and advance economic growth and diversification in Alaska by providing various means of financing and investment.

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NOAA ship Henry B. Bigelow ([Photo credit to NOAA Atlantic Oceanographic & Meteorological Laboratory, U.S. Department of Commerce](#))