

Halter Marine Upgrades Launch Way in preparation for Polar Security Cutter



A rendering of the U.S. Coast Guard's forthcoming Polar Security Cutter. U.S. Coast Guard

PASCAGOULA, Miss. – The U.S. Coast Guard's Polar Security Cutter (PSC) is rapidly progressing through the detailed design phase, and Halter Marine is actively preparing for its construction, the company said in a Jan. 6 release.

In July 2021, Halter Marine will complete upgrades to the launch way area where the PSC will be constructed. The 460-foot icebreaker is the heaviest vessel per foot of length that Halter Marine has constructed at its Pascagoula, Mississippi, shipyard. The launch way has been fortified to accommodate the PSC's 19,000-ton launch weight.

The Crowley Taino and El Coqui were the heaviest vessels previously to launch from the company's dock. These two vessels are 720 feet in length, providing a greater distance to leverage their weight.

"Based on weight per foot, the PSC outweighs those vessels," said Bob Merchant, president and CEO of Halter Marine. "The PSC needs 22 tons of capacity per linear foot of rail line, and we have designed the new launch way to accommodate 27 tons per linear foot. We are preparing for our newest vessel while also looking forward to future, larger vessels."

The upgrade project began in July by removing 11 launch way rail lines. Next, crews dug 1,283 holes that were filled with grout and concrete to serve as new piles. These piles will transfer the PSC's heavy load to a deeper level than previously possible.

“Each drilled hole is 110 feet long, and we are pouring 27 miles of piles,” said Kevin Amis, executive vice president of operations for Halter Marine. “We are completing this project with a perfect safety record. I’m proud of the women and men at Halter Marine and Malouf Construction for accomplishing this invaluable project with a true focus on safety.”

The launch way upgrade project is funded with a generous grant from the Mississippi Development Authority (MDA).

“We appreciate the continued support of the MDA along with our federal, state and local officials,” Merchant said. “We are thankful for that, and we are all proud to support the men and women of the U.S. Coast Guard by providing them with better capabilities to operate in the Arctic.”