

U.S. Coast Guard Announces Juneau Homeporting for Future Icebreaker



From U.S. Coast Guard Headquarters, Aug. 14, 2024

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Coast Guard announced Wednesday it will homeport a commercially procured icebreaker in Juneau.

The Coast Guard is acquiring the Aiviq, a U.S. registered ship originally built to serve as an Arctic oil-exploration support vessel, which has an icebreaking capability sufficient to serve as a Coast Guard medium polar icebreaker, following modification.

“The United States is an Arctic nation, and the Coast Guard is vital to providing presence in our sovereign waters and the polar regions,” said Adm. Kevin Lunday, Coast Guard vice commandant. “As we continue to build the Polar Security Cutters, acquiring a commercially available polar icebreaker will enable the Coast Guard to increase our national presence in the Arctic, and homeporting this cutter in Alaska demonstrates the Service’s steadfast commitment to the region.”

The Coast Guard was appropriated \$125 million in fiscal year 2024 to purchase a commercially available icebreaker. Currently, the Aiviq is the only U.S. built commercial vessel meeting necessary icebreaking standards. The Service anticipates the vessel will reach initial operational capability in two years.

The Coast Guard has been the sole provider of America’s polar icebreaking capability since 1965 and is seeking to increase its icebreaking fleet with new Polar Security Cutters. The

Coast Guard currently operates two polar icebreakers, the Coast Guard Cutter Healy, a medium polar icebreaker, and the Coast Guard Cutter Polar Star, the only U.S. heavy polar icebreaker.