



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**  
GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

Department of Administration

KELLY TSHIBAKA, COMMISSIONER

10<sup>th</sup> Fl. State Office Building  
PO Box 110200  
Juneau, AK 99811-0200  
Main: 907.269.6293  
Fax: 907.465.2135  
[www.doa.alaska.gov](http://www.doa.alaska.gov)

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Dear IBU-Represented Employees:

Yesterday the Inland Boatmen's Union notified us of an approval by their membership to go out on strike and shut down our State's Marine Highway system. In my opinion, a strike should be an action of last resort, not first resort, only to be exercised after all efforts to reach an agreement have been fully exhausted.

As you may know, the Department of Administration (DOA) has been in negotiations for a new contract with the IBU for some time now. While no new contract agreement has yet been reached, I hope that the IBU will continue meeting with the State and we will soon have our agreement.

On multiple occasions over the last week, in a spirit of good faith, we asked IBU leadership for another meeting with us and the Federal Mediator, sharing that the State had some new ideas to bridge our differences. The Federal Mediator recommended mediations continue due to the cooperation demonstrated by the State. He opposed the "last best offer" made by the IBU. The IBU has chosen to not meet with us, however, and has instead focused more on an unnecessary strike vote.

If the strike continues, the Alaska Marine Highway system may well be shut down and many State residents and visitors may well be adversely affected, some in a very serious and hurtful way. It is unfortunate that such unnecessary harm will be put upon our friends, fellow employees, neighbors and visitors. We urge all employees to report for work as scheduled.

We have been asked what happens to employees' pay and benefits during a strike and how long the strike may last. First, an employee on strike will, of course, receive no pay from the State for any time spent on strike. Second, employees on strike may have to pay all their premium costs for their health insurance through COBRA, or possibly lose their entire coverage, depending upon circumstances. Third, we have no idea how long a strike will last.

Finally, the State believes that any strike is unlawful and unprotected. If this is true, then striking employees could be subject to discipline, including termination, for striking in support of illegal bargaining proposals. If you have questions about the open issues in the negotiations, please contact your IBU leadership.

I hope this communication answers some of the questions you may have about possible personal impacts of an ongoing strike. If you have further questions, please submit them in writing to the Division of Personnel and Labor Relations ([DOA.DOP.LaborRelations@alaska.gov](mailto:DOA.DOP.LaborRelations@alaska.gov)) for our response and answer.

Sincerely,  
Kelly Tshibaka  
Commissioner, Department of Administration