

**SENATE COMMITTEE ON COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND
TRANSPORTATION**

Full Committee

Nomination Hearing

Wednesday, November 19, 2025 at 11:00 A.M.

REPUBLICAN QUESTIONS FOR THE RECORD

Admiral Kevin Lunday

COVER PAGE

SENATOR JOHN THUNE (R-SD)

1. Admiral Lunday, what is the status of joint U.S. Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection coordination for procuring and deploying long-duration and long-range unmanned aircraft to support missions such as border patrol, maritime domain awareness, and drug interdiction?

Response: We are evaluating all Long-Range Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) options to meet Coast Guard missions. Separately, the Coast Guard and Customs and Border Protection (CBP) continue to jointly operate CBP's MQ-9 UAS fleet from CBP's National Air Security Operations Center in San Angelo, TX.

2. What is the current force structure behind U.S. Coast Guard unmanned aerial system operations, and is this a mission that could be hosted in non-traditional locations, specifically inland cities and states, given the remote nature of the platform?

Response: We operate our unmanned aircraft systems (UAS) across three lines of effort: Long-Range, Medium-Range, and Short-Range. We currently partner with Customs and Border Protection to operate MQ-9s from San Angelo, Texas for long-range missions. We employ contractor-owned, contractor-operated UAS onboard our National Security Cutters for medium-range missions, and over 300 small UAS flown by more than 600 trained operators at nearly 100 separate shore and afloat units across the United States support short-range missions. The Coast Guard is evaluating locations, including inland sites, for a potential future Unmanned Systems training center.

3. Given the administration's rightful focus on drug interdiction in the Eastern Pacific Ocean and Caribbean Sea, what resources or authorizations would bolster ongoing U.S. Coast Guard and joint force missions to defeat and deter Designated Terrorist Organizations and cartels? How have resources provided in P.L. 119-21, One Big Beautiful Bill Act, enabled ongoing operations?

Response: The One Big Beautiful Bill Act is vital, funding the new cutters, aircraft, unmanned systems, technology, and shore infrastructure for cutter homeporting and aircraft hangars. We will rely upon this investment for decades ahead for counter-drug operations, and providing \$2.2 billion for depot maintenance on existing assets is critical to sustaining readiness of today's aging assets. This initial capital investment will help ensure the Service emerges from a readiness crisis decades in the making. To enhance efforts against narco-terrorists and cartels in the Eastern Pacific and Caribbean, we need additional and sustained operations and support funding to grow our military workforce by at least 15,000, operate and sustain those newly funded assets, and deliver mission success for the Nation. The Coast Guard is a \$20 billion Service operating with a \$14 billion budget, and, if confirmed, I look forward to working with Congress and the Administration on necessary funding increases to sustain the Service into the future.

SENATOR JERRY MORAN (R-KS)

The recently passed Reconciliation bill included more than \$266 million to acquire long-range unmanned aircraft for the Coast Guard. I understand the USCG has pilots that fly the MQ-9 UAS and jointly operates them with Customs and Border Protection. Given the unique capabilities of the MQ-9B – and its commonality with the CBP – this would be a useful solution for maritime ISR.

1. Can you provide the status of the Coast Guard's acquisition of such long-range aircraft?

Response: [We are evaluating all potential Long-Range Unmanned Aircraft System solutions and options to best meet Coast Guard missions.](#)

SENATOR DAN SULLIVAN (R-AK)

Icebreakers and Homeporting

Congress secured historic Coast Guard funding in the recent One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA) reconciliation package. Under OBBBA, the Coast Guard will receive nearly \$25 billion, including nearly \$9 billion for icebreakers and is designed to enhance Arctic operations while revitalizing U.S. shipbuilding.

Strategic shipbuilding projects like the new Arctic Security Cutters offer both urgent operational capability and an opportunity to expand U.S. shipbuilding.

Additionally, OBBBA provided approximately \$4.4 billion for shore infrastructure and homeports investments to support the new cutters and aircraft. Alaska has ports capable of accommodating these vessels, and communities are willing to invest in supporting infrastructure, including housing and childcare.

1. Will you commit to considering locations in Alaska – where the ice is – for the homeporting of multiple Arctic Security Cutters?

Response: [Yes, if confirmed I will consider locations in Alaska for the home porting of multiple Arctic Security Cutters.](#)

2. Private investment can complement and support the needs of Coast Guard personnel and their families, particularly for housing and childcare. But private partners need clarity and predictable assurances before they can commit capital. Will you commit to working with me to provide the assurances and certainty needed to unlock that investment?

Response: [Yes, if confirmed I will work with you and the Committee to support the needs of service members and their families, including options to work with private investment that can appropriately complement and support Coast Guard efforts.](#)

Alaska Infrastructure Projects

The Coast Guard is undertaking major infrastructure investments across Alaska—including new homeports, housing projects, and facility upgrades in Sitka, Seward, St. Paul, Juneau, and Kodiak. These projects support Arctic and Pacific operations, new vessel homeporting, and quality of life for personnel. Alaska's remote construction environment, short building seasons, and high costs make oversight and timely execution critical.

1. What internal oversight mechanisms are in place to ensure Alaska infrastructure projects remain on schedule?

Response: [Through Force Design 2028, the Coast Guard is making sweeping changes to streamline decision-making, accelerate contracting and acquisitions projects to deliver capabilities at speed and scale, and strengthen accountability and oversight. To that end, the Service established the Program Executive Office for Shore Infrastructure, which is responsible for the lifecycle planning, execution \(including adherence to schedule\), accountability, and oversight of shore infrastructure projects, to include both new construction and repair/maintenance activities.](#)

2. How are potential delays or funding gaps communicated to leadership and Congress?

Response: The Coast Guard regularly provides updates on its shore infrastructure projects through informal correspondence, delivery of the Quarterly Acquisition Brief, and topic-specific briefs when requested. Funding gaps are communicated through the annual budget process and the Service's Unfunded Priorities List report to Congress, including the Fiscal Year 2026 Unfunded Priorities List that I released in November 2025.

3. Are any Alaska-related projects expected to be submitted in the upcoming budget requests? If so, which projects are top candidates?

Response: Yes, the FY 2026 Unfunded Priorities List includes a \$30 million request for an aircraft hangar in Saint Paul, AK and \$50 million for additional housing at several Alaska locations, potentially including Kodiak, Seward, Juneau, and/or Sitka. Additionally, personnel readiness funding requests in the Unfunded Priorities List will positively impact all Coast Guard members, include those serving throughout the State of Alaska, if provided for in future appropriations.

St. Paul Forward Operating Location

The Coast Guard is pursuing a Forward Operating Location in St. Paul, Alaska. Preliminary hangar repair costs are \$30 million, while new construction would be more expensive. The Coast Guard included \$20 million for this project in its FY2025 Unfunded Priorities List.

1. What is the current plan for restoring or rebuilding hangar capability in St. Paul, and how will the FY2025 Unfunded Priorities List request be prioritized if not fully funded?

Response: The FY 2026 Unfunded Priorities List includes a \$30 million request that provides for an aircraft hangar in Saint Paul, AK.

Sitka Homeport and Housing Projects

Sitka will serve as a key homeport for Fast Response Cutters (FRCs) and a vital housing hub for Coast Guard personnel. The Coast Guard awarded a contract for FRC and WLB pier improvements in August 2025, and long-term housing recapitalization and construction plans are underway.

1. Do you anticipate needing additional funds to complete the Sitka homeporting and housing projects? If so, how does the Coast Guard plan to secure that funding—through future budget requests or reprogramming actions?

Response: Yes, the FY 2026 Unfunded Priorities List includes a \$50 million request for additional housing across Alaska, potentially including Sitka.

Seward Homeport and Housing Projects

Seward is slated to become a new homeport for FRCs, with a new waterfront facility and supporting housing. Environmental work and land acquisition are largely complete, and detailed design and contract awards are expected in FY 2026.

1. Are you confident current funding will cover both the homeport and housing projects, or should we expect an additional funding request next fiscal year?

Response: No. The Coast Guard fully funded the FRC homeport project in Seward and the FY 2022 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act funds the initial housing project. The FY 2026 Unfunded Priorities List includes a \$50 million request for additional housing across Alaska, potentially including Seward.

Petersburg – WCC Program

Petersburg Borough is a small, but proud Coast Guard community and is the homeport of the PIKE, a Coast Patrol Boat, and the ELDERBERRY, an Inland Buoy Tender. The ELDERBERRY and its Coast Guard crews have performed great service over the years managing aids to navigation in area Southeast Alaska waters that have major tidal swings and often dangerous currents. The ELDERBERRY, however, is aging and in need of replacement. There are currently four inland buoy tenders nationally in the ELDERBERRY's class that the Coast Guard is proposing to replace with three WLIs as part of the WCC Program. The Coast Guard's prior leadership committed to replace the ELDERBERRY with one of those WLIs and homeport it in Petersburg.

1. Under your leadership, will the Coast Guard keep that commitment and homeport a future WLI in Petersburg?

Response: Yes.

Western Alaska Oil Spill Response

In 2023, Congress enacted Section 11309 of Division K of the Don Young Coast Guard Authorization Act of 2022 (part of the James M. Inhofe National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2023, P.L. 117-263) to direct the Coast Guard to develop oil spill response criteria specifically for Western Alaska. These Western Alaska Oil Spill Planning Criteria (WAOSPC) are intended to replace the existing Alternative Planning Criteria (APC), which have been used because National Planning Criteria (NPC) are not suitable for the unique geography, weather, and infrastructure of Western Alaska. Stakeholders continue to raise questions regarding the Coast Guard's implementation of Section 11309, the interim use of APC, and the consideration of subzones before the WAOSPC framework is finalized.

1. What is the current status and timeline for implementing the Western Alaska Oil Spill Planning Criteria (WAOSPC)?

Response: The Coast Guard conducted comprehensive outreach and consultation and assembled a workgroup of subject matter experts to develop a Regulatory Project Proposal that will support WAOSPC regulations. The Service is moving forward with the NEPA analysis, which will take 18-24 months.

2. APC has been used in lieu of National Planning Criteria (NPC) because NPC is inappropriate for Western Alaska. Has anything changed regarding this determination?

Response: No. Under the current program, a vessel owner or operator makes the determination as to whether NPC is appropriate for that specific vessel and operating area. Section 11309 states that the Coast Guard is to determine where in Western Alaska that NPC is inappropriate. The Coast Guard's determination will be incorporated into the WAOSPC implementing regulations.

3. What steps have been taken to ensure that updates to existing APC plans—while necessary to maintain coverage until WAOSPC are in place—are accepted in a timely manner?

Response: The Coast Guard has a uniform review process applied to all APC submissions. The time required for the review depends on the complexity of the APC submission and the scope of the proposed updates. Each plan is unique to the submitter and therefore review timelines vary accordingly.

4. What steps have been taken to ensure that APC plans are fully consistent with the statutory requirements of Section 11309 and not reliant on outdated APC criteria wherever possible?

Response: The Coast Guard reviews each submission independently and according to a uniform review process. While Section 11309 does not have requirements for APC submissions, the Coast Guard does review submissions for consistency with all applicable requirements of the Clean Water Act.

5. Given that subzones have previously been attempted and proven ineffective in Western Alaska, and that Section 11309 only allows such consideration after WAOSPC are finalized, why is the Coast Guard exploring subzones now, before the necessary framework and regional lessons learned are fully integrated?

Response: The Coast Guard has not developed subregions or subzones in Western Alaska with respect to planning criteria at this time.

Tribal Consultation

15 years ago, under 33 U.S.C. § 1321c, Congress directed the Coast Guard to develop a tribal consultation policy and authorized the Service to enter into cooperative agreements with Indian tribes to improve oil-spill prevention, preparedness, and response. That authority has never been utilized.

In the Senate-passed Coast Guard Authorization Act, Sections 144, 169, and 216 would reinforce this direction by requiring the Coast Guard to consult with Indian tribes, establishing a Special Advisor for Tribal and Native Hawaiian Affairs, and assessing the adequacy of emergency-response capabilities at Alaska ports near Bering Strait vessel traffic, including Point Spencer, Nome, and Kotzebue.

All of these provisions are aimed at addressing the long-standing gaps in spill prevention and response that put our coastal villages, communities, and environments at risk.

1. Given the existing authority Congress provided, the direction offered in the Senate-Passed Coast Guard Authorization Act, and the growing risks to our coastal communities, will you commit to take specific steps to work with tribal governments to close these gaps in oil-spill prevention and response?

Response: Yes.

SENATOR TODD YOUNG (R-IN)

1. How should we be working with our international partners to combat illegal, unregulated, and unreported (IUU) fishing and other Chinese gray zone activities?

Response: First, the Coast Guard enforces U.S. sovereignty over the vast areas of U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone in Oceania, protecting U.S. fish stocks from IUU fishing. We also combat IUU fishing by assisting other nations, leveraging strong partnerships through joint patrols supported by 12 bilateral law enforcement agreements. We deploy and embark those nation's shipriders, share intelligence, and build capacity to counter illegal fishing and malign Chinese activity. This asserts U.S. leadership, protects our shared interests, and ensures a free, open, and secure maritime domain.

- a. What regions are the most troubling to you in the IUU fishing space?

Response: The Indo-Pacific and West Africa regions are the most troubling for Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing, where state-sponsored fleets undermine U.S. and partner national security and economic interests.

- b. What other gray zone threats are you focused on?

Response: In addition to combating illegal fishing, the Coast Guard is laser focused on securing port infrastructure against physical and cyber threats, including Chinese-made cranes that, if compromised, could disrupt the flow of commerce vital to America's economic prosperity and strategic mobility.

2. How can the Coast Guard work with the Navy to boost our partnerships with other countries, especially as it relates to Chinese malign activity?

Response: The Coast Guard is integrated with the U.S. Navy and other parts of the Department of War to counter Chinese malign influence, including conducting joint patrols, exercises, and training with partner nations to enhance their maritime law enforcement capabilities and protect their sovereign waters from illegal fishing and other illicit activities. The Coast Guard's unique blend of military, law enforcement and intelligence authorities makes us a trusted partner in regions like the Indo-Pacific.

- a. What unique attributes does the Coast Guard bring to these partnerships?

Response: The Coast Guard is uniquely positioned to support these partnerships as the only U.S. federal agency with the capability and authority to project law enforcement presence throughout the U.S. Exclusive Economic Zone and on the high seas.

- b. Are there any authorities that the Coast Guard needs to be able to implement and manage these international partnerships?

Response: Yes, the Coast Guard requires its own organic authority and funding to unilaterally provide training and other security assistance to international partners. The Service currently relies on the Department of State and the Department of War for both the

funding and authority to conduct these security cooperation missions, which is inefficient and limits the ability to respond to emerging opportunities. Additionally, using foreign ports for homeporting or operations may require authority to negotiate new status of forces and other international agreements.