

CITY OF UNALASKA
UNALASKA, ALASKA

RESOLUTION 2026-01

A RESOLUTION OF THE UNALASKA CITY COUNCIL RATIFYING THE MAYOR'S DISASTER EMERGENCY DECLARATION AND EXTENDING THE DECLARED DISASTER EMERGENCY

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska is a remote island community located in the Aleutian Archipelago of the State of Alaska and is dependent upon its airport and communications infrastructure for the delivery of essential goods and services; and

WHEREAS, between December 26 and December 29, 2025, the City of Unalaska experienced an intense and prolonged storm event, resulting in significant damage to critical infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the storm caused the end of the Unalaska airport runway to be washed away and damaged the airport runway lighting system, substantially impairing air transportation access to and from the community; and

WHEREAS, due to this damage, the Alaska Department of Transportation closed the airport runway in Unalaska; and

WHEREAS, the storm also damaged the fiber optic cable supplying the island with internet and cellular service, resulting in widespread communications disruptions, including 911 services, affecting residents, businesses, emergency responders, and government operations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska is home to the International Port of Dutch Harbor, which is the number one commercial fishing port in the United States by volume, and is a critical hub for the national seafood supply chain; and

WHEREAS, the City is currently preparing for the commencement of the commercial fishing industry's "A Season," in January 2026, and requires the timely arrival of thousands of seafood harvesters and processing workers to support fishing and seafood processing operations; and

WHEREAS, damage to the airport runway and runway lighting system discontinued air service to Unalaska for a period of time, leaving workers stranded in Anchorage, unable to travel to Unalaska as scheduled, with more workers expected to arrive; and

WHEREAS, the disruption to air transportation and communications infrastructure has materially impacted private businesses, seafood harvesters, processors, and related industries, threatening substantial economic losses, workforce shortages, and interruptions to commercial fishing operations of statewide and national significance; and

WHEREAS, continued disruption to transportation and communications infrastructure may impair the City's ability to support commerce, maintain essential services, and protect the economic stability of the community and the broader seafood industry; and

WHEREAS, communications outages constitute a public safety risk, with emergency 911 services experiencing intermittent outages; and

WHEREAS, the disaster includes severe impacts to transportation, communications, public safety, and commercial activity, including disruptions to workforce mobilization and commercial fishing operations of statewide and national importance; and

WHEREAS, Unalaska Code of Ordinances § 2.96.030 authorizes the Mayor to proclaim a disaster or emergency when a disaster has occurred or is imminent, and authorizes the City Council to ratify actions taken and extend the declared emergency by resolution; and

WHEREAS, on December 29, 2025, the Mayor of the City of Unalaska issued a Disaster Emergency Declaration proclaiming that a disaster emergency exists within the City of Unalaska;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY UNALASKA CITY COUNCIL:

Section 1. Ratification

The Unalaska City Council hereby ratifies the Disaster Emergency Declaration issued by the Mayor on December 29, 2025, and all lawful actions taken pursuant to that declaration.

Section 2. Nature of the Disaster

The disaster consists of severe storm damage to critical transportation and communications infrastructure, including airport runway integrity, runway lighting systems, and fiber optic communications facilities, resulting in significant impacts to public safety, essential services, and commercial activity.

Section 3. Area Affected

The disaster emergency affects the City of Unalaska and the International Port of Dutch Harbor, including the Tom Madsen Airport and citywide communications systems.

Section 4. Continuation of Emergency Authorities

During the extended emergency period, the disaster response and recovery provisions of the City's disaster plan shall remain in effect, including authorization for:

- The use and distribution of City personnel, supplies, equipment, materials, and facilities for disaster response and recovery;
- Emergency procurement and contracting;
- Coordination with State and Federal agencies, including the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, mutual aid partners, and other intergovernmental support;
- The issuance of orders, proclamations, and regulations by the City Manager and Director of Emergency Preparedness as authorized by law; and
- Requests for appropriate State and Federal disaster assistance.

Section 5. Extension of Disaster Emergency

The disaster emergency declared by the Mayor is hereby **extended for an additional period of thirty (30) days**, effective upon expiration of the initial seven (7) day emergency period, unless earlier terminated by action of the City Council.

Section 6. Transmission

The City Clerk is directed to transmit a copy of this resolution and the Mayor's Disaster Emergency Declaration to the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, as practicable.

Section 7. Effective Date

This resolution shall take effect immediately upon adoption.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by a duly constituted quorum of the Unalaska City Council on January 2, 2026.



Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr.
Mayor

ATTEST:



Estkarlen P. Magdaong, CMC
City Clerk



MEMORANDUM TO COUNCIL

To: Mayor and City Council Members
From: Marjie Veeder, Acting City Manager
Date: January 2, 2026
Re: Resolution 2026-01: Ratifying the Mayor's Disaster Emergency Declaration and Extending the Declared Disaster Emergency

SUMMARY: Staff requests City Council ratification and extension of the Mayor's Disaster Emergency Declaration issued on December 29, 2025, pursuant to Unalaska Code of Ordinances § 2.96.030. The declaration was issued in response to severe storm damage that compromised the City's airport runway, runway lighting system, and fiber optic communications infrastructure, resulting in significant public safety, operational, and economic impacts.

Although immediate response actions are underway, emergency conditions continue to exist and we may experience additional transportation access disruptions; communications systems are unstable, which may result in impaired emergency response capabilities; and substantial business and commerce impacts may be experienced, particularly related to the upcoming commercial fishing "A Season". Extending the emergency declaration will allow the City to continue emergency procurement, intergovernmental coordination, and recovery actions necessary to protect public health, safety, and the economic stability of the community.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL ACTION: On December 29, 2025 the Mayor issued a Disaster Emergency Declaration pursuant to UCO § 2.96.030. No prior City Council action has been taken to ratify or extend the declaration.

BACKGROUND: Between December 26 and December 29, 2025, Unalaska experienced an intense and prolonged storm event that caused widespread damage to critical infrastructure. The storm washed away the end of the airport runway, damaged the runway lighting system, and disrupted the fiber optic cable supplying internet and cellular service to the island.

As a result of the runway damage, the Alaska Department of Transportation closed the Unalaska airport, effectively discontinuing regular air service to the community for a period of time. The communications outages have resulted in intermittent disruptions to emergency 911 services and significantly hindered coordination among emergency responders, utilities, businesses, and government agencies.

These impacts have occurred at a particularly critical time for the community. Unalaska is home to the International Port of Dutch Harbor, the number one commercial fishing port in the United States by volume. Industry is currently preparing for the start of the commercial fishing industry's "A Season," which begins this month, and requires the arrival of thousands of workers.

DISCUSSION: The purpose of extending the disaster emergency is not merely procedural; it is necessary to ensure continuity of authority, flexibility, and coordination during an evolving recovery environment. Key factors supporting the extension are outlined below.

Ongoing Transportation Disruptions: Airport runway and lighting repairs are not complete, and air service may again be impacted during repairs or if additional damage is discovered. Impaired air access restricts the movement of residents, emergency personnel, contractors, technical specialists, and equipment essential to recovery and public safety operations.

Communications Instability and Public Safety Risk: Damage to the fiber optic cable has resulted in widespread communications outages, including intermittent disruptions to emergency 911 services. These conditions constitute an ongoing public safety risk.

Economic and Commercial Impacts: The interruption of air transportation and communications has materially impacted private businesses, seafood harvesters, processors, and related industries. Workforce mobilization delays threaten significant economic losses, operational disruptions, and downstream impacts to the statewide and national seafood supply chain. These conditions directly affect the City's economic stability and revenue base.

Need for Continued Emergency Authorities: An active emergency declaration allows the City to:

- Utilize emergency procurement and contracting authorities to expedite repairs and services;
- Coordinate efficiently with State and Federal agencies, including the Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management;
- Request and receive disaster assistance; and
- Deploy City resources flexibly in response to changing conditions.

Absent an extension, the City's ability to respond effectively and lawfully to ongoing emergency conditions would be constrained.

ALTERNATIVES:

1. **Adopt the Resolution Extending the Disaster Emergency (Staff Recommendation)**
This option preserves necessary emergency authorities and allows the City to continue coordinated response and recovery efforts.
2. **Allow the Disaster Emergency to Expire:** If the declaration expires, the City would lose emergency procurement authority and flexibility at a time when infrastructure repairs, communications stabilization, and economic recovery are ongoing. This option increases operational risk and could delay recovery.
3. **Extend the Emergency for a Shorter Duration:** A shorter extension is possible; however, given current uncertainty regarding repair timelines and transportation access, a brief extension may require repeated Council action and create administrative inefficiencies.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS: The disaster emergency itself does not appropriate funds but enables emergency procurement, contracting, and potential reimbursement eligibility. Repair costs, response expenditures, and economic impacts are still being assessed and documented. Some costs may be offset through State or Federal disaster assistance, though this is not a certainty. Failure to extend the emergency may increase overall costs due to delays, inefficiencies, or lost economic activity.

LEGAL: Unalaska Code of Ordinances § 2.96.030 and Alaska Statute 26.23.140 authorize the City Council to ratify and extend a disaster emergency declaration.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff recommends adoption of Resolution 2026-01, ratifying the Mayor's Disaster Emergency Declaration and extending the declared emergency period for an additional 30 days.

PROPOSED MOTION: I move to adopt Resolution 2026-01.

CITY MANAGER COMMENTS: The continuation of emergency conditions warrants Council action to extend the disaster declaration. Doing so ensures the City retains the authority and flexibility necessary to protect public safety, support critical infrastructure recovery, and mitigate ongoing economic impacts to the community and the commercial fishing industry. I recommend Council adoption of the resolution.

ATTACHMENTS: Mayor's Disaster Emergency Declaration dated December 29, 2025

CITY OF UNALASKA

DISASTER EMERGENCY DECLARATION

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska is a remote island community located in the Aleutian Archipelago of the State of Alaska and is dependent upon its airport and communications infrastructure for the delivery of essential goods and services; and

WHEREAS, between December 26 and December 29, 2025, the City of Unalaska experienced an intense and prolonged storm event, resulting in significant damage to critical infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the storm caused the end of the Unalaska airport runway to be washed away and damaged the airport runway lighting system, substantially impairing air transportation access to and from the community; and

WHEREAS, due to this damage, the Alaska Department of Transportation closed the airport runway in Unalaska; and

WHEREAS, the storm also damaged the fiber optic cable supplying the island with internet and cellular service, resulting in widespread communications disruptions affecting residents, businesses, emergency responders, and government operations; and

WHEREAS, the City of Unalaska is home to the International Port of Dutch Harbor, which is the number one commercial fishing port in the United States by volume, and is a critical hub for the national seafood supply chain; and

WHEREAS, the City is currently preparing for the commencement of the commercial fishing industry's "A Season," which begins on or about January 20, and requires the timely arrival of thousands of seafood harvesters and processing workers to support fishing and processing operations; and

WHEREAS, damage to the airport runway and runway lighting system has discontinued air service to Unalaska, resulting in more than 500 workers presently stranded in Anchorage, unable to travel to Unalaska as scheduled, with more workers on the way; and

WHEREAS, the disruption to air transportation and communications infrastructure has materially impacted private businesses, seafood harvesters, processors, and related industries, threatening substantial economic losses, workforce shortages, and interruptions to commercial fishing operations of statewide and national significance; and

WHEREAS, continued disruption to transportation and communications infrastructure may impair the City's ability to support commerce, maintain essential services, and protect the economic stability of the community and the broader seafood industry; and

WHEREAS, communications outages constitute a public safety risk, with emergency 911 experiencing intermittent outages; and

WHEREAS, the airport runway closure reduces the likelihood of receiving additional technical assistance and equipment to address the communications failures; and

WHEREAS, the disaster includes severe impacts to transportation, communications, public safety, and commercial activity, including disruptions to workforce mobilization and commercial fishing operations of statewide and national importance; and

WHEREAS, Unalaska Code of Ordinances § 2.96.030 authorizes the Mayor to proclaim a disaster or emergency when a disaster has occurred or is imminent.

**AN EMERGENCY IS HEREBY DECLARED
BY THE MAYOR OF UNALASKA**

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr., Mayor of the City of Unalaska, do hereby proclaim that a DISASTER EMERGENCY exists within the City of Unalaska.

1. Nature of the Disaster

Severe storm damage to critical transportation and communications infrastructure, including airport runway integrity, runway lighting systems, and fiber optic communications facilities.

2. Area Affected

The City of Unalaska and the International Port of Dutch Harbor, including the Tom Madsen Airport and citywide communications systems.

3. Emergency Actions Authorized

This proclamation activates the disaster response and recovery provisions of the City's disaster plan and authorizes:

- The use and distribution of City personnel, supplies, equipment, materials, and facilities for disaster response and recovery; and
- Emergency procurement and contracting; and
- Coordination with State and Federal agencies, including the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management, mutual aid and intergovernmental support; and
- The issuance of necessary orders, proclamations, and regulations by the City Manager and Director of Emergency Preparedness as authorized by law; and
- Requests for appropriate State and Federal disaster assistance.

4. Duration

This emergency proclamation shall remain in effect for seven (7) days from the date of issuance unless earlier terminated or extended by resolution of the City Council pursuant to UCO § 2.96.030.

5. Council Ratification

If the City Council is not in session at the time of issuance, a special meeting of the City Council shall be requested for the purpose of ratifying actions taken under this proclamation and considering any extension of the emergency.

ISSUED THIS this 29th day of December 2025.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr.", is written over a horizontal line.

Vincent M. Tutiakoff, Sr.
Mayor