

U.S. Senator Maria Cantwell
Subcommittee Hearing on “Evaluating Progress After Historic Investments in the U.S.
Coast Guard”
January 29, 2026
Sen. Cantwell Remarks
[\[VIDEO\]](#)

Sen. Cantwell: Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman. I agree with you, and definitely want to work with you and also agree with what Admiral Lunday just said, that we need to have this domain expertise. What I really worry about [in] the Arctic writ large is that without the capacity and without the resources that people think that we're missing, and as fish move further north, people think that those are their fish. And I definitely think that we have to have the capacity to address the issue, and certainly want to work with Senator Sullivan on this important issue, as we share a fishing fleet that is challenged every day over this problem.

Admiral, it's again good to see you. Wanted to ask you about Slip 36 at Seattle. You guys have updated the aging facility plan and the workforce there. The Reconciliation bill, I think, had some resources. Is Seattle part of your prioritization plan for...the infrastructure plan for the future?

Adm. Lunday: It is, Ranking Member Cantwell. The critical part of the work there is to rebuild and build out the capability for our Polar Security Cutters that will be homeported there, as well as Healy, which continues to be homeported there.

Sen. Cantwell: And so that's like part of an ongoing commitment that the resources are there, right? Committed?

Adm. Lunday: Yes, Ranking Member. We had resources through annual appropriations before for some of that work, and reconciliation adds additional resources to advance and complete that work.

Sen. Cantwell: Yeah, I think \$323 million. Is that right?

Adm. Lunday: I believe that's correct, Ranking Member.

Sen. Cantwell: And then what about -- when would we expect to see the Polar Security Cutter construction? When would we expect to see ships arriving in Puget Sound?

Adm. Lunday: The first Polar Security Cutter, number one, being built in Mississippi is currently on track for completion and delivery to the Coast Guard in 2030. And so I can get back to you with a specific projected date on when it will arrive at its home port, but it'll be delivered to the Coast Guard right now on track in 2030.

Sen. Cantwell: Okay. Thank you. Appreciate that. And then we've talked about Cape Disappointment and the repair to damages for [the] homeport and new surf boats being built...in our state. We want you to come and visit. Cape D obviously is a very important part of our plan.

And so we're trying to help dedicate...the maritime sector, with the incredible exports that come out of the Columbia River. You agreed to work with us on a long-term plan to help fix the problems there at Cape D, so particularly accommodating new surf boats. So will you come visit? And will you help us continue to get this plan for Cape D?

Adm. Lunday: We will, Ranking Member Cantwell. Not only the improvements at Cape Disappointment, but also the long-term dredging challenge there at Cape Disappointment. And actually, if the government is funded, my current plan is to travel out to the Pacific Northwest in mid-February, including a visit to Station Cape Disappointment and the Motor Lifeboat School.

Sen. Cantwell: Good, good. Happy to join you at that. It might be better to come later in the year, but that's okay. We will take the early visit.

Adm. Lunday: I'll look forward to returning when you can join.

Sen. Cantwell: Yeah, thank you. Thank you so much. You know this issue of...our fishermen and the Coast Guard and the C-130s. Earlier this month, when a vessel ran aground, it was a C-130 that was first on the scene. We understand the C-130s, including at times, one from Kodiak, that our fishermen rely on, have been routinely transporting migrants to detention centers. Is that correct? Have the Coast Guard aircraft or personnel been used for transporting detained individuals on behalf of CBP or ICE?

Adm. Lunday: Yes, Ranking Member. The Coast Guard has a unique capability within the Department of heavy lift that enables us to move people and equipment. Mostly that's our C-27 medium-range aircraft, although we have used C-130s in some cases to do that support to ICE or CBP at their request.

Sen. Cantwell: So how is that...how is that helping us meet our other mission of dealing with our fishermen that desperately need it in these treacherous waters?

Adm. Lunday: Ranking Member Cantwell, I've given direction to our operational commanders that those types of support operations to other agencies are not to interfere with our primary national security or search and rescue missions, and we do that kind of balancing against mission priorities frequently. That's part of the nature of what we do and what operational commanders do, and so that has not impeded our ability to conduct our other primary statutory missions.

Sen. Cantwell: Well, I see my time has expired, but I'm going to ask some follow-up questions to that, and also on the Jones Act. But thank you, Mr. Chairman. Appreciate it.

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