



City of Duluth
Fire Department

602 West 2nd Street • Duluth, Minnesota • 55802
(218)730-4393 • Fax (218)730-4381 • esimonson@duluthmn.gov

An Equal Opportunity Employer

January 12, 2016

RE: All-Hazard Response Vessel

The Duluth Fire Department is tasked with providing emergency services to a 26-mile long waterfront and active commercial port. Currently, the fire department protects the port and related areas largely from shore. We do not have the resources to provide this service responsibly or effectively in part because we do not have an appropriate vessel to address the complex problems that arise while protecting the port and surrounding waterfront of Duluth and Superior, WI. The purpose of this letter is to request your support in acquiring an all-hazard response vessel.

Presently, the department's only response vessel is a small, underpowered 12-foot long inflatable boat which is kept on a trailer at our Headquarters Fire Station. It has no patient handling, fire suppression, or environmental protection capabilities.

With your support, our proposed solution is to add an all-hazard quick response vessel to service our area. The vessel would serve both Duluth and Superior through our mutual aid agreement with the Superior Fire Department. It will greatly enhance our ability to provide reliable service to the port and surrounding waterfront.

This new vessel would be slipped at the Duluth downtown waterfront, ready to go at a moment's notice. It would be fully equipped for search and rescue emergencies, EMS, and fire suppression of ship and waterfront properties. The vessel would be available to respond to environmental emergencies as well. Through research, we believe that a shallow water landing craft would best serve our area. This design will allow us to quickly deploy resources on shore in areas where traditional land-based resources struggle, or may have a delayed response (e.g. Park Point, due to operation of the Lift Bridge).

We are currently working with a local vendor for a preliminary design and considering all funding options with a primary focus on federal grants. We expect the grant application window to open in the spring, and are working to establish a list of supporting local businesses around the port, commercial users of the port, and elected officials whose district(s) are within the scope of the port. The U.S. Coast Guard is aware of our efforts, and they are 100% supportive.

My goal today is to request your support in the form of a letter of endorsement. While we are hoping to obtain 100% grant funding, we are also seeking potential sources if we need to finance a portion of the project. We would welcome any financial commitment you could make. Please do not hesitate to call me with questions. I look forward to hearing from you.

Respectfully,

Erik Simonson
Deputy Chief/Emergency Manager
218-730-4393
esimonson@duluthmn.gov

ES:ek