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## **Lake Michigan Carferry's *Badger* One Step Closer to Resuming Service in 2024**

LUDINGTON, MICH. – Lake Michigan Carferry announced today that it has received the final permit required from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to start rebuilding the dock infrastructure necessary to operate its historic and beloved car-and-passenger ferry, the *Badger*.

The official federal greenlight comes after months of engineering work and planning, and follows earlier awarded approval from the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE).

Work could start as soon as this week to begin the process of constructing two new counterweight structures for the carferry's ramp system. On July 21, the counterweight structure on the port side failed, which rendered the apron ramp non-operational and caused an abrupt end to the *Badger's* 70th season. Fortunately, nobody was injured in the incident and neither the ramp itself nor the *Badger* sustained damage.

"We're very excited to receive the much-anticipated federal and state permits to start construction on the lifting mechanism for the apron here in Ludington," says Sara Spore, General Manager of Lake Michigan Carferry (LMC). "It's a major step forward in the concerted effort to get the *Badger* back underway to serve our port communities and carry passengers and transport freight across our marine highway on Lake Michigan."

LMC has engaged key Great Lakes marine partners to lead the construction effort for the extensive project. Al Bufka Construction Inc. from Manistee is expected to be onsite this week to start site preparation and demolition of the port side counterweight. The King Construction Co., out of Holland, Mich., and Underwater Construction Corporation, from its regional office in Michigan, are striving to complete the extensive below-water work prior to the onset of winter ice formation. The full-scale project is expected to take several months to complete.

"With the season ending unexpectedly this year, we cannot wait to welcome everyone back in the spring of 2024," Spore says.