

Published on *American Geosciences Institute* (<https://www.americangeosciences.org>)

Home > President Obama plans to accelerate the acquisition of a new U.S. icebreaker

---

## President Obama plans to accelerate the acquisition of a new U.S. icebreaker

September 1, 2015

In order to keep up with increasing ship traffic in the Arctic Ocean, President Obama has announced his plan to accelerate the acquisition of a new heavy icebreaker for the United States. The plan would call for faster acquisition of a replacement heavy icebreaker by 2020 instead of 2022 to help with the growth of human activity in region. The icebreaker will be used to promote global commerce and scientific research and will be managed by the U.S. Coast Guard. In addition, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and the Coast Guard would begin to map and chart waters in the Chukchi, Beaufort, and Bering Seas to promote safe maritime transportation under the plan.

Currently, the United States Coast Guard only has two functional polar icebreakers, the Healy, a medium icebreaker commissioned in 1999, and the Polar Star, a heavy-duty icebreaker commissioned in 1976.

Sources: [Whitehouse.gov](http://Whitehouse.gov), [The Washington Post](http://The Washington Post)

---