



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

ALASKA DIVISION

709 West Ninth Street, Room 851

P.O. Box 21648

Juneau, Alaska 99802

907-586-7418 | 907-586-7420 FAX

October 17, 2005

REFER TO
HDA-AK
File #: 0001(277)

Mayor Mark Begich
Office of the Mayor
Municipality of Anchorage
P.O. Box 196650
Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650

SUBJECT: Knik Arm Crossing: Government Hill Community

Dear Mayor Begich:

Reference is made to your letter of October 5, 2005 in which you expressed your deep concern that the FHWA – Alaska Division has prematurely eliminated reasonable alternatives from further consideration on the Knik Arm Crossing project.

I have reviewed that decision and believe that the FHWA has acted correctly, and has not taken our responsibility to determine a reasonable range of alternatives for the Knik Arm Crossing lightly. From January through September of this year, we have deliberated with the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA), the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (AKDOT&PF), the public, 23 state, local and federal agencies, including your office, the Government Hill Community, and the Alaskan Command. Specifically, at the request of Senator Lisa Murkowski, we expanded the scoping period and the area to include alignments on military land. Based on the results of our draft Scoping Summary Report, we have concluded that the best transportation facility, along with the least risk to military mission, is to stay below the bluff. I am sure that you will understand the rationale of this decision once the Scoping Summary Report, currently being prepared by KABATA for our review and acceptance, is finalized. The report will then be available to the public, hopefully by the end of the month. The FHWA will be sure to make a copy of the report available directly to your office.

We understand and share your concerns that the impacts of construction and operation of an Anchorage connection to the Knik Bridge would impact our stakeholders on Government Hill. While a build, no build decision is yet to be made, our NEPA process requires that we consider mitigation for unavoidable impacts. The federal government's right of way program offers responsible relocation for any impacted residences and businesses. Our Section 4(f) requirements dictate that we avoid, and if that is not possible, minimize and finally mitigate the impacts before determining there is no prudent and feasible alternative. As per telephone

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KABATA



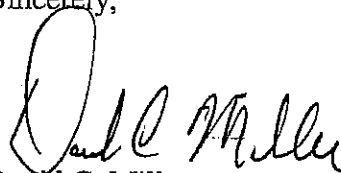
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discussion of October 14th, we are offering more and soliciting your help, to create an exemplary mitigation and enhancement plan.

The FHWA will bring experts in Context Sensitive Solutions to Anchorage to meet with you and your staff, the community of Government Hill and KABATA to explain the concepts, show examples, and help you get started. I am indebted to you for your willingness to take a leadership role and offer your staff expertise to assist the residents develop a plan. Our experts are expected to be available to you on November 7, 8, and 9. A location and time will be set with the residents of Government Hill, hopefully on October 20 at the Community Council meeting.

Again, I share your deep concern, and appreciate your willingness to work with us for an exemplary mitigation and enhancement plan for Government Hill for each of the alternatives that would impact the community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David C. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "D".

David C. Miller
Division Administrator

cc: George Wuerch, Executive Director, Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority