



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

ALASKA DIVISION

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October 17, 2005

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

Senator Lisa Murkowski
Washington D.C. Office
709 Hart Senate Building
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510-0203

SUBJECT: Knik Arm Crossing: Government Hill Community

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Reference is made to your letter of September 30, 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 Bridge project. You further asked that I review the decision and correct any misinterpretations that may have been made.

Based upon my review, I 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. We have deliberated with 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, the Government Hill Community, and the Alaskan Command from January through September 2005. Specifically at your request, we extended this period and the study area before reaching the conclusion that the best transportation facility, along with the least risk to the military mission, is to stay below the bluff. I am sure 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 that the impacts of construction and operation of an Anchorage connection to the Knik Bridge will impact our stakeholders on Government Hill. Our 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. Understanding and honoring your concern, we offer our best resources to you and the community to make this an exemplary mitigation and enhancement project.

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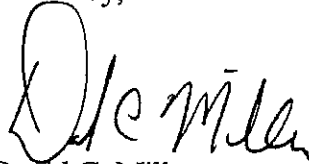
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Senator, the FHWA would like to bring in experts in the field of Context Sensitive Solutions to help Government Hill prepare for the task of developing a mitigation plan. While the build, no build decision is yet to be made, I want our NEPA document to fully explore mitigation and enhancement measures for each alternative. Since this is a local preference, I am requesting that you bring to bear your considerable influence to help Government Hill and all stakeholders to come to consensus on what those measures should be. Only if there is a viable plan in place could the FHWA require it in any future decision. Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Sincerely,



David C. Miller
Division Administrator

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