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KTNA – Talkeetna, Alaska » Knik Arm Bridge Under Fire From Taxpayer Advocacy Group

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by Phillip Manning ~ June 26th, 2013

[20130626KnikBridge](#)

Many efforts have been made to find an alternative means of moving people and vehicles from the Mat-Su Valley to Anchorage and points south. Bridges have been discussed off and on for decades, and the M/V Susitna sits at anchor in Ketchikan. One project is still apparently moving forward, however, the Knik Arm Bridge.

The bridge project is being driven by the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA). Recently, the bridge project encountered difficulty when the State Legislative Auditor raised concerns that the estimates for the bridge's toll income were too optimistic, meaning it would be more difficult to pay the cost of building the bridge.

On Wednesday, the advocacy group Taxpayers for Common Sense awarded the project with the title of "Golden Fleece," which they give to projects that they say are, "prime examples of

government waste.” Erich Zimmermann, Senior Policy Analyst with Taxpayers for Common Sense, explains some of the group’s concerns.

[Zimmermann1](#)

Taxpayers for Common Sense also mentions increasing cost estimates cause concern, and that the methodology for funding the bridge is flawed.

[Zimmermann2](#)

After the legislative audit, KABATA is having their socioeconomic data reviewed by an independent firm, as Shannon McCarthy, Public Relations Director at KABATA, explains.

[McCarthy1](#)

The Taxpayers for Common Sense article refers to KABATA as a “cheerleading organization” for the bridge, which McCarthy believes is unfair.

[McCarthy2](#)

KABATA is expecting the new usage and toll estimates this fall. They currently estimate construction of the bridge could begin in 2014, and that the bridge could open in 2018.