From: Vigil, Randal P POA <Randal.P.Vigil@usace.army.mil>
Sent time: 04/01/2014 03:51:19 PM
To: Meade, Chris
Subject: FW: West Side Road 2014
Attachments: West Side Road 2014.pdf ATT00001.txt

FYI

-----Original Message-----
From: Stephanie Scott [mailto:sscott@haines.ak.us]
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2014 1:56 PM
To: Vigil, Randal P POA
Subject: [EXTERNAL] West Side Road 2014

Dear Randy,

It has been suggested that we share our point of view re the West Side road relative to the Juneau Access Project with you! So I am! Please see the attached letter recently sent to the House and Senate Joint Transportation Committee. I understood they ran out of time before any such presentation could be made.

Sincerely,

Stephanie

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HAINES BOROUGH, ALASKA

P.O. BOX 1209 • HAINES, ALASKA 99827

Administration 907.766.2231 • (fax) 907.766.2716

Tourism 907.766.2234 • (fax) 907.766.3155

Police Dept. 907.766.2121 • (fax) 907.766.2128

Fire Dept. 907.766.2155 • (fax) 907.766.3373

March 5, 2014

Senator Dennis Egan, Chair, Senate Transportation Committee
Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair, House Transportation Committee

Dear Senator Egan and Representative Wilson,

As you know, the Haines Borough prefers improved ferry service over a hard link as the method for achieving the connection of Juneau to interior and western Alaska. Our reasoning is simple: the Alaska Marine Transportation System uses the existing highway that ties together the communities in the archipelago: Lynn Canal and the Inside Passage. Juneau is but one of the communities in that group. When considering the massive investment of state funds that would be required to build the East Side Road up Lynn Canal (some say more than half a billion dollars for the link from Juneau to Katazhin), there might be a greater benefit to a greater number of people to provide for regular, reliable ferry service between already established ports – forestalling the necessity to build the two new ports required by the current plan for the East Side Road.

The Haines Borough has been criticized for lobbying against this linkage on the basis that the project is about Juneau, not Haines. We beg to differ. Most of the proposed road travels through the Haines Borough. If the proposal were simply to extend the Eagan Highway, say to Kensington Mine, the Haines Borough would remain silent, if not actively in support. But that is not the stated objective. The stated objective is to drive a hard link from Juneau (overlooking the fact that a ferry will be required nonetheless) to the Haines Highway or the Klondike Highway.

Given that a hard link is the objective, we have repeatedly asked DOT/PF to reconsider the West Side linkage. Now we ask you to request a serious, numbers-based, presentation of this West Side road. We understand that some of the members of the Senate and House Transportation Committees are unfamiliar with the West Side option. This option travels up the very flat terrain of the west side of Lynn Canal.

The advantages of the West Side route are many. Though none of us on the Borough Assembly are civil engineers, we are told that the West Side route is less challenging

West Side Road 2014.pdf

to construct and would be less problematic to maintain given that it is free of the many slide and avalanche zones that characterize the East Side route. Like the East Side route, it would provide land access to land that is already in various stages of development – commercial and residential; but unlike the East Side Route, in the future, the West Side link could connect the additional settled communities of Excursion Inlet and Gustavus. We understand that the larger goal of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is exactly that: to link communities with a road system. We think these advantages make the West Side route worthy of your consideration. We respectfully request that you request DOT/PF to brief you on the West Side Route; its advantages and disadvantages compared to the East Side Route, so that you can make an informed decision about the best way to improve Juneau Access and enhance our statewide transportation system.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Scott
Mayor, Haines Borough

Cc:
Senate Transportation Committee members: Sen. Fred Dyson, Vice-Chair; Sen. Anna Fairclough, Sen. Hollis French, Sen. Click Bishop.

House Transportation Committee members: Rep. Doug Isaccson, Vice-Chair, Rep. Kreiss-Tompkins, Rep. Bob Lynn, Rep. Craig Johnson, Re. Lynn Gattis, Rep. Eric Feige

Senator Bert Stedman

Members, Haines Borough Assembly
Julie Cozzi, Interim Haines Borough Manager
Michelle Webb, Interim Haines Borough Clerk

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Stephanie Scott
Mayor, Haines Borough
907-766-2231 ext.30