

March 31, 2014

Senator Kevin Meyer, Co-Chairman
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Meyer,

Information was presented to your committee during a hearing on HB 23, legislation relating to the Knik Arm Crossing, about traffic forecasting that HDR completed for DOT&PF on a potential highway bypass of the Parks Highway around downtown Wasilla. I'm writing to tell you about the purpose of that traffic forecast and what I believe to be a misapplication of the information presented to you on March 25th.

HDR was hired by DOT&PF to perform planning level analysis for a potential rerouting of the Parks Highway south of downtown Wasilla for the Parks Highway Alternative Corridor Project. As part of that contract, HDR developed traffic forecasts for potential east-west bypass alignments of the Parks Highway. The purpose of the forecast was to predict traffic that would use highway routes to travel around Wasilla. The data collection and updates were at a planning level and focused on this area of the borough.

The forecast was not intended to produce a regional traffic model for South- Central Alaska as we would not consider our effort to be a reliable prediction of traffic on the Knik Arm Crossing. We were not retained by DOT&PF to predict traffic on the Knik Arm Crossing and we believe attempts to use the work we produced to characterize traffic on the bridge to be misleading and an inappropriate use of the data. Moreover, the traffic model used in the Parks Highway Alternative Corridor Project study was not calibrated or validated to account for tolls or the complexity of the travel patterns anticipated. Such an analysis is complicated, especially in the case of the Knik Arm Crossing which will have very unique and complex travel demand synergy between industrial areas, ports, rail, and correctional/court facilities on both sides of the bridge. Nor did the traffic model examine changes that might occur in the Anchorage Bowl that would affect traffic on the bridge.

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In closing, HDR stands behind our work on the travel forecasts completed for the Parks Highway Alternative Corridor Project. The forecasts are accurate for their intended purpose and should not be used as an indicator for predicting traffic on the Knik Arm Crossing.

Sincerely,
HDR Alaska, Inc.

A handwritten signature in green ink, appearing to read 'D. Hippe', is written over the printed name.

Duane Hippe, P.E.
Senior Vice President