

Ginger Blaisdell

From: Rep. Shelley Hughes
Sent: Wednesday, February 11, 2015 9:54 PM
To: Ginger Blaisdell
Subject: FW: Juneau Access Project: Does not account for EMS needs

Post on BASIS plz. This came in while we were meeting.



Representative Shelley Hughes

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From: Adrienne Antoni [mailto:adrienne.antoni@gmail.com]
Sent: Tuesday, February 10, 2015 4:12 PM
To: Rep. Neal Foster; Rep. Shelley Hughes
Cc: Rep. Charisse Millett; Rep. Matt Claman; Rep. Benjamin Nageak; Rep. Daniel Ortiz; Rep. Louise Stutes
Subject: Juneau Access Project: Does not account for EMS needs

Dear Members of the House Transportation Committee:

I first learned about the Juneau access project last summer, when I moved to Juneau from Ketchikan. When I first learned of it, I wasn't passionate about the project one way or the other. That indifference drastically changed on November 16, 2014.

My boyfriend and I spent the weekend in a cabin out the road, near Amalga Harbor at Mile 26. It was a nice winter weekend, with a thin layer of snow and temperatures just below freezing.

On the drive back into town, we came upon a rollover accident at Mile 18, just north of Cohen Drive. My boyfriend happened to look down into the ditch on the west side of the highway to see a young girl waving frantically while crawling out of the window of an overturned black Jeep Cherokee. We immediately stopped and went straight down to the Jeep.

Two nineteen year old girls and their dog had been in the car when it lost traction, fish-tailed, flipped, and ultimately landed upside down against a hemlock tree. Somehow the two sustained only minor injuries. My boyfriend and I both have first aid training, so we bandaged up their cuts, wrapped them in blankets, and put them in our car to prevent them from going into shock until the ambulance arrived.

Thankfully we had cell service at Mile 18, and we called 911 right around 3:30 pm just moments after we arrived at the scene. The second car to arrive at the scene drove into town and said they, too, would call 911 from an area with better cell coverage.

Mile 18 is not far from town. It's only one mile north of the Lynn Canal Fire Station. It's roughly five miles north of Auke Bay. Roughly 15 miles north of Bartlett Regional Hospital, and only 18 miles north of downtown. Despite that close proximity, the first volunteer fire truck arrived 41 minutes after we put in the first call to 911. I'll repeat that: even though we were one mile from the nearest fire station, and roughly five miles from Auke Bay, it took over 40 minutes for the first EMS responder to arrive.

While we waited in the car consoling the two nineteen year old girls by keeping them warm and trying to make them laugh, my mind went to the Juneau access road. We were at Mile 18, just a few miles out of town. What would we have done if we'd been 50 or 75 miles out the road, with no cell phone coverage? Would we have left the scene of the accident to get to a place with better cell phone coverage? Would we wait however long it would take for the next car to pass by? Would we then need to wait several hours before the first EMS responder would arrive? And what would we have done if the accident was 75 miles out the road at night and in poor weather?

Talking with the girls, we realized why they weren't badly hurt. They told us that since the roads were icy, they were going about 20 miles an hour under the posted speed limit. That speed wasn't slow enough to prevent their rollover accident, but their injuries likely would have been worse had they been traveling at a higher speed.

As we waited with those girls, a third car stopped. The driver told us he lives on Cohen Drive, around Mile 18, and that was the fourth accident he'd seen between Auke Bay and Cohen Drive that afternoon. Four accidents in one afternoon on one small stretch of road. Again, that begs the question: what will happen to all the accidents that will occur 75 miles out the road—and they most certainly will occur—if Juneau EMS can't even keep up with current needs on the current road system? And who will pay for all those extra EMS services?

This seems like a major oversight in the road planning process that should be addressed with real and sincere scrutiny. Otherwise, the state will quite literally be putting Alaskan traveler safety in jeopardy for the sake of building an unneeded dead-end road.

And by the way, didn't the state conduct an environmental study that showed the road will actually be more expensive to build and maintain than simply sticking with the ferries in Lynn Canal? Why are we considering a more expensive and more dangerous way to travel when what we have now works just fine?

Thanks for your time and consideration. I very much appreciate the work you're all doing this year given the state's budget!

King regards,

Adrienne Antoni

Juneau