



April 30, 2026

The Honorable Calvin Schrage
Co-Chair, House Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 410
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: West Susitna Access Project – Importance of Stage 2 Funding

Dear Representative Schrage,

I appreciate you raising questions regarding the funding proposed for Stage 2 of the West Susitna Access Project. I want to provide clarity on how the project is structured and why maintaining continuity between stages is essential to successful delivery.

The project is intentionally sequenced across multiple stages to align with construction logistics, seasonal constraints, and cost efficiency. Stage 1 is anticipated to construct the road corridor to the Big Susitna River, including development of a staging area that is critical for subsequent bridge construction activities.

Stage 2 is specifically designed to build on that progress by mobilizing and transporting bridge materials to the staging pad constructed under Stage 1. This step is necessary to position materials in advance of the 2027 winter construction window, when conditions allow for efficient and safe installation of the Susitna River bridge.

As you know, the Susitna River crossing is the critical path element of the entire project. Without it, the road cannot fulfill its purpose of providing overland access to lands west of the river, which today remain largely inaccessible except by air or seasonal routes. The bridge is foundational to realizing the project's purpose of improving access for recreation, settlement, and economic development.

This project is also being advanced in close partnership with the Knik Tribe, which is a formal project partner and plays an active role in planning, environmental work, and project delivery. Maintaining schedule continuity is important not only for construction efficiency, but also to uphold the commitments and coordination efforts that underpin this partnership.

More broadly, constructing new road access into previously undeveloped areas, are important in Alaska and require careful logistics planning. Unlike urban or reconstruction projects, these efforts depend on tightly coordinated staging, seasonal execution, and early material mobilization. Missing a construction window, particularly for a river crossing of this scale, has outsized schedule and cost consequences.

Contractor involvement further reinforces this reality. Contractors must plan mobilization, workforce, and equipment deployment well in advance, especially in remote environments. The ability to stage materials under Stage 2 directly supports efficient contracting and reduces risk, cost escalation, and remobilization impacts in later phases.

If Stage 2 funding is removed or delayed, we would lose the ability to stage materials in time for winter 2027 construction. This would likely result in at least a full year delay, increased costs due to remobilization, and inefficiencies associated with re-establishing access and logistics in a remote environment.

In short, Stage 2 is not a stand-alone expansion of scope—it is a necessary continuation of Stage 1 to maintain schedule, control costs, and ensure the project can deliver its intended benefits.

I would be happy to walk through the STIP sheets and project sequencing with you in more detail or provide any additional information that would be helpful. Additional project information is also available at: <https://dot.alaska.gov/westsusitnaaccess/>.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Ryan Anderson".

Ryan Anderson, P.E.

Commissioner

Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities