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Governor Parnell has unfortunately allocated \$35 million for the flawed and destructive “Road to Nowhere” in his [2015 budget proposal](#). The Alaska Legislature will begin deliberations on this project starting next week. **For two decades SEACC has blocked efforts to punch a highway through the extraordinary Berners Bay and Lynn Canal.** Unfortunately, the idea won’t go away and, if the legislature approves the appropriation that Governor Parnell proposed, construction could very well begin this summer. Alaskans need to speak up and let our elected officials know that this “Road to Nowhere” is a bad idea.

As SEACC members and supporters you are probably all too familiar with the numerous problems but for those who have arrived to Southeast since 2008, when we last fought this project, or are new to the area, here is a review.

The plan is to end mainline ferry service at Auke Bay and extend the road from Echo Cove on the Katzechin River. From there, passengers will embark on a shuttle ferry to Haines or Skagway. Numerous, here is a quick assessment of them:

- **Safety through this region will always be a major concern.** According to previous studies, the road would be unreliable in winter months, and would be due to avalanche danger. In 2006, Alaska Department of Transportation (DOT) estimate that over a 40 year period, and an estimated 600 non-fatal accidents would occur. In the past, there have been no safety related deaths on the marine highway.
- **This transportation plan eliminates foot and public transportation options.** By ending ferry service at Terminal for Haines and Skagway you eliminate transportation options. This will put additional burdens on those unable to travel by car. It also compromises the ability of tourists and people who are accessing different communities.
- **The price for this mega project is extreme.** According to the most recent Alaska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) the road is projected to cost \$520,088,600 but that price leaves out the cost of the bridge that will increase the overall price. A thorough geotechnical study for the 20 miles south of Auke Bay by DOT (phase I was done by Golder Assoc. in 2006 a phase II was not completed); it is a difficult stretch of land will drive up costs even more. The maintenance costs will be enormous. Additional costs of having two ferry terminals to serve Juneau when only one is necessary.
- **This road will destroy fish and wildlife habitat.** Activities such as adding fill material at Berner’s Bay for bridge construction as well as a bridge to cross the Katzechin River will destroy habitat. The Road will also pass through major sea lion haul outs and rookeries. [Recent studies](#) show a decline in [Kensington goat population](#), and the road corridor lies atop key goat winter range.
- **Alaska is going through a steep decline in revenues.** Due to last year’s change in tax structure, there is a decrease in revenues. Even with dramatic cuts in our expenditures the state is projected to lose \$2.4 Billion. So with deep cuts already expected in education and social services why waste money on a wasteful project.

So the big question remains: Due to the dangerous, expensive, and destructive nature of the current system, is it worth the cost of maintaining it when a viable alternative option already exists?

Call your legislator today and let them know that you support the Alaska Marine Highway System. Stop spending money on this boondoggle.

If you have questions or want to help get involved this legislative session feel free to contact us at james@seacc.org . Click [here](#) to for more info on our website.

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