

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

December 21, 2012

The Honorable Sean Parnell
Governor of Alaska
P.O. Box 11001
Juneau, Alaska 99811-0001

Dear Governor Parnell:

Governor Parnell, your decision, announced on December 4, to abandon the ongoing Alaska Class Ferry project in favor of smaller shuttle ferries raises many questions. As Mayor of Haines, I have been inundated with comments, questions, and requests for information from Haines residents. As to the questions and requests, I am as bereft of information as any of my constituents. I cannot overemphasize the importance of this issue to my constituents.

The Haines Borough Assembly will convene on Tuesday, January 8, 2013, and again on January 22nd. Sometime during our January schedule, I expect that the assembly will wish to express a more formal opinion on this issue. For that reason, I respectfully ask that you and your staff provide me with whatever of the following information that it is possible to assemble and transmit by early January, so that assembly members will be able to incorporate the information into their thinking. I have tried to formulate questions that I think are key to our perception of the course change, but please do not hesitate to confine your response to my questions. Please feel free to tell us what you believe we need to know in order to think clearly and carefully about your proposal.

First, we are all very curious to know how the decision was made. Your press release states that the decision was made "after it became apparent ... that building a 350-foot ferry, on budget, in Alaska, could not be accomplished." Where did these cost figures come from? Who participated in this decision?

Would, or should, the new plan be subject to legislative approval?

Why did you not follow established procedures for decisions about Alaska's ferries? The Marine Transportation Advisory Board was established in 2003 and adopted in statute in 2009.

It is a part of your Department of Transportation. The MTAB was taken completely by surprise by this decision. As far as I can discover, the Ketchikan shipyard was taken by surprise by this decision, as were Southeast Alaska legislators. It looks to me as though your Deputy Commissioner for Marine Operations, Captain Michael Neussl was also surprised. Many Haines residents feel that circumvention of the public process is one of the most important issues implicated by your decision. How can I reassure them that participation in the public process is not in vain?

If there is no design established yet for the two shuttle ferries your new plan contemplates, how can you make the statement:

By setting a new course, Alaskans can build two smaller Alaska Class Ferries and stay on budget, and at the same time provide the same or better level of service Alaskans expect from our marine highways.

[Press release, Governor's Office, December 4, 2012]

What level of service do you believe is appropriate for Upper Lynn Canal? By that I mean, how many cancellations or seasickness-inducing sailings are you planning for? The *Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan Shuttle Ferry Study*, prepared in January of 2010, notes that

If the vessel is sized to the traffic demand, AMHS must ask of their customers whether a reduced reliability of service is acceptable, especially during the winter months. If a vessel can make 99 out of 100 scheduled trips in the summer, but only 80 out of 100 trips in the winter, does that reach an acceptable level of service? How should the ferry compare with other publically funded transportation such as the highways? These are policy questions, not design questions.

[Study, page 21]

That study discusses wave conditions and wind speeds in various areas in Southeast. While I am not familiar with the exact terminology used, I question whether the Elliot Bay group properly assessed conditions in Upper Lynn Canal. The wave heights throughout the study appear to be underestimated.¹ The LeConte was cancelled twice this week due to 11-foot seas. The past several weeks have seen sustained winds in the 55-knot range, with higher gusts. While the LeConte (235') was cancelled Wednesday and Friday, the Taku (352') sailed Thursday, in essentially the same weather.

What connection, if any, does this change bear to the proposed Juneau Access Road?

What is the conceptual design for the shuttle ferries? Is it true that you are considering an at least partially open car deck? [Did you see this recent picture of the LeConte in Upper Lynn Canal?]

¹ It is also possible that sea conditions need to be reexamined in light of research that indicates that wind speeds and wave height will increase with global warming. See http://www.researchgate.net/publication/50850792_Global_trends_in_wind_speed_and_wave_height



Your DOT Commissioner (Acting) Pat Kemp told me that his department is "*going to assemble a paper that discusses the information and key points that led to the decision.*" [Email to me, Dec. 11, 2012] Can you tell me when this study will be available?

Finally, may I meet with you or your representative soon, in person or via teleconference, about our concerns? Thank you.

Sincerely,

Stephanie K. Scott
Mayor, Haines Borough

Cc: Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Dennis Egan
Representative Bill Thomas
Representative-Elect Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins
Representative Cathy Munoz
Representative Peggy Wilson
Commissioner Pat Kemp
Deputy Commissioner Captain Michael Neussl
Robert Venables, Chair, Marine Transportation Advisory Board
Shelly Wright, Executive Director, Southeast Conference
Stan Selmer, Mayor, Municipality of Skagway



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. 907.766.2115 • (fax) 907.766.3373

Stephanie Scott,
Mayor

January 16, 2013

Jerry Lapp,
Deputy Mayor

Dear Senator Egan and Representative Wilson,

Dave Berry Jr.,
Assembly Member

Steve Vick,
Assembly Member

Debra Schnabel,
Assembly Member

Joanne Waterman,
Assembly Member

Norman Smith,
Assembly Member

Thank you for convening a joint meeting of your respective Transportation Committees to inquire into the Administration's proposal to alter the plan to build the Alaska Class Ferry. The attached questions were collectively prepared by the Haines Borough Assembly during a special meeting convened on January 15, 2013, and we respectfully request the Committee's assistance in getting answers to them.

The plan to build and deploy the Alaska Class Ferry was developed with all stakeholders involved. In fact, a little over a year ago, the process was lauded by Commissioner Luiken at the December 15, 2011 Anchorage meeting of the Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB).¹ We hope that you can bring to light the information that we need in order to fully evaluate this change of plan. We also hope that you can restore the public to its role through MTAB in the planning process.

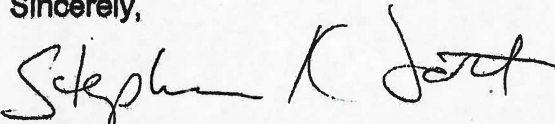
Mark Earnest,
Borough Manager

Thank you for your work.

Julie Cozzi,
Borough Clerk

Sincerely,

Michelle Webb,
Deputy Clerk


Stephanie Scott
Mayor, Haines Borough

¹ According to meeting minutes, Commissioner Luiken "thanked the board and DOT & PF officials for their stable and persistent work on the Alaska Class Ferry project. He said it demonstrated the excellent team effort made working with the design company and Alaska Ship and Drydock. He said that the partnership with the design company (Elliott Bay Design Group in Seattle) and Alaska Ship and Drydock are a good example of how the process can work by bringing together two groups for the purpose of building a superior ferry."

Questions to assist the Alaska State House and Senate Transportation Committees inquiry into Governor Parnell's proposed replacement of the Alaska Class Ferry with two smaller vessels, prepared by the Haines Borough Assembly

I. Service Standard in Southeast Alaska: frequency, versatility, capacity, and backup

- a. Demonstrate how the plan to use the smaller ferries meets the need for versatility (i.e. the Prince Rupert run).
- b. The Alaska Class Ferry was suited to serve the entire southeast region. Explain how the plan for two smaller ferries supports the need for backup service should other vessels experience mechanical problems, and can add flexibility to the system when special community events require greater access. What is the envisioned operating region of the new plan?
- c. How will the new plan address the needs for service in the Lynn Canal during periods of inclement weather, especially high seas?

II. The Role of the Marine Transportation Advisory Board (MTAB)

- a. Wasn't the purpose behind the MTAB public process to get the design "right"? Wasn't the goal of the process to match the vessel to the need? MTAB identified the actual need and the proper solutions were articulated in the form of a concept design. Shouldn't the focus be on funding the right tool for the job, as opposed to changing the tool?
- b. What is the role of the MTAB in the Administration's new plan?
- c. How does the State's plan for the role of MTAB align with AS 19.65.180 (C) with respect to developing a strategic plan for the Alaska Marine Highway?

III. The Proposed Design for the Two Smaller Ferries to Replace the Alaska Class Ferry

- a. There is a renewed focus on bow doors. While bow doors are said to offer great efficiency of roll-on/roll-off operation, the need to seal things properly to provide sufficient watertight integrity may result in significant construction and operation costs. There have been a couple of serious life-taking ferry accidents in the Baltic – all related to bow door failures.
- b. Does not the proposed design, stern/bow roll-on/roll-off (RORO) require a specialized loading dock? Is this factor considered in the cost/benefit analysis of the new plan?

- c. A partially opened car deck configuration has been referenced in earlier discussions. Will this be safe for the proposed routes? If it is deemed unsafe, how will the change affect the cost of construction for the two smaller ferries?

IV. Funds/Cost: The purpose of the new plan is to control costs. How will it achieve this? "With declining oil production and declining state revenue, we have to be smarter with the people's money while meeting Alaskans' marine transportation needs." (December 4, Press Release from Governor Parnell announcing new direction.)

- a. We understand that the Alaska Class Ferry design was 35% complete, and that thus the cost estimates were in the same preliminary state. Provide us with the information that led to your conclusion that the AK Class Ferry would run over budget.
- b. To what level have the smaller ferries suggested as an alternative to the Alaska Class Ferry been designed? To what level has the cost of construction been estimated? Will you please provide us with the design and cost estimate documents?
- c. Provide the estimates of the operation and maintenance for one large Alaska Class Ferry, that makes one round trip but that can handle expected loads compared to the cost of operating 3 small shuttle ferries with crews several times a day.
- d. According to Commissioner Kemp's December 20 report, the decision to build two smaller ferries instead of the Alaska Class Ferry is based in part on a prediction in a report of "a substantial increased cost that resulted in the highest annual AMHS subsidy of any alternative UAF analyzed" (page 2, Commissioner Kemp, 12/20/12). The report is based on AMHS data from 2006. Why do you have such confidence in a report based on 6-year-old data, knowing that utilization (both commercial and non-commercial) has increased in the interim?
- e. How do you read the following sections of the UAF report that connect the highest increase in subsidy to a ferry-road combination as opposed to the replacement of the Malaspina by an Alaska Class Ferry?

Under Option 1B (Malaspina is replaced by an Alaska-Class shuttle ferry):

AMHS' financial performance is only slightly worse than the status quo (Option 1A) (p.189)

Profitability index "is statistically identical to that of the Status Quo and is to be expected." (p.191)

The Option 4 (Multiple Alaska-Class Ferry plus Juneau Access Highway) would (p.190):

Result in a greater operating subsidy than all options except for the "full" Service Expansion Option 3.

The revenues generated by the expanded Lynn Canal service fall well short of the level expected to accrue from the proposed capital expense.

In this option, revenue yield actually decreases while Marine Vessel Operating costs remain unchanged.

The solution – change the current labor contract:

Option 4 "appears the least 'unprofitable' of the six options." (p. 191)

--

The report concludes: "Options 1B and, 4 illustrate that ship replacement of one or more existing vessels with Alaska-Class ships will increase the subsidy requirement, particularly in Option 4 where the fleet size increases." (p. 193)

- f. The per/mile ticket prices between Haines and Skagway are the highest in the system per/mile than on other legs of the Marine Highway. How will the construction of lower cost ferries affect user costs, specifically in Lynn Canal?

V. Reorganization of the State Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

- a. Why is it necessary to eliminate the position of Deputy Commissioner of Marine Operations? Where will the functions of the Deputy Commissioner be handled? Help us understand the proposed reorganization and administrative structure.
- b. The Alaska Marine Highway is a statewide function similar to airports and road systems. It serves communities and commerce from Bellingham, Washington to the Aleutians. Where does it fit in the structure?

VI. Process Oriented Questions:

- a. Why did the current Administration wait so long, at such a cost (+/- \$3 million), to weigh into a public process that was producing something "unwanted"? Is there some element in the procurement regulations that needs to be addressed to avoid wasting funds in a similar manner in the future?



Municipality of Skagway

GATEWAY TO THE KLONDIKE

P.O. BOX 415 SKAGWAY, ALASKA 99840

(PHONE) 907-983-2297 – Fax 907-983-2151

WWW.SKAGWAY.ORG

January 18, 2013

The Honorable Dennis Egan
State Capitol, Room 9
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Beth Kerttula
State Capitol, Room 404
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Egan and Representative Kerttula:

The Municipality of Skagway is concerned about Governor Sean Parnell's recent decision to change the scope of the Alaska Class Ferry (ACF) project from construction of one vessel to the construction of two, smaller vessels. The decision raises questions but provides few answers about the direction the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) will follow as the state upgrades the AMHS fleet to best serve our communities.

The Municipality's most immediate concern is that the decision was made without any apparent public involvement. The Alaska Class Ferry enjoyed widespread support among communities and local decision makers. Yet, the Marine Transportation Advisory Board, elected officials from communities that rely on the AMHS, regional organizations such as Southeast Conference and the public at large were denied the opportunity to review and comment on the proposed change.

The Municipality applauds the decision of the Senate and House Transportation Committees to conduct public hearings on this important development. We respectfully request that you investigate the following issues:

1. **SAFETY:** Lynn Canal is well known for its high winds and rough seas. Will safety considerations be compromised by the proposed features of smaller hull size, partial open deck and bow doors?
2. **DEMAND:** Will the new smaller ships be able to meet the capacity demand in the Lynn Canal corridor? What will be the impact on our local economies of reduced capacity, in particular when the 12-hour rule is implemented?

3. **CONSTRUCTION COST:** Without a design, how does the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities know that the construction cost of two boats will not exceed the cost of one ACF taking into consideration costs of redundancy such as twice the number of engines, radars, generators, etc.?
4. **OPERATING COST:** How do operating costs pencil out when expenses such as fuel and crews are doubled and two boats must be maintained, rather than one?
5. **VIABILITY:** A recent memo from Commissioner Pat Kemp stated that the position of Deputy Commissioner of Marine Operations will be eliminated from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. The Municipality of Skagway is concerned about the perception that the department is planning to dismantle the Marine Highway.

Thank you for your consideration.



Stan Selmer
Borough Mayor

cc: Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair, House Transportation Committee
Representative Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins, House Transportation Committee
Representative Cathy Muñoz, House Finance Committee
Governor Sean Parnell
U.S. Senator Mark Begich
U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski
U.S. Representative Don Young
Marine Transportation Advisory Board
Southeast Conference

Dana Owen

From: Richard Stokes <rastokes@gci.net>
Sent: Tuesday, January 22, 2013 9:03 PM
To: Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: DOT and plans for a new ferry--or two

Categories: Green Category

Senator Egan:

I was in the audience at the joint hearing last Thursday when Commissioner Kemp was being quizzed about DOT's plans.

I don't have the expertise to know what kind of ferry DOT should build for Southeast Alaska. Certainly the construction of another in the Taku class seemed to make sense. The Taku brought me to Juneau from Prince Rupert in May 1971, and I realize she's almost ten years older than that. Good as she has been she can't last forever.

The roll-on roll-off seemed to make some sense. I don't know about the question of open decks that Commissioner Kemp so adroitly evaded when you and others asked him. I realize a hearing was scheduled for January 24, but it sounded unlikely that you or the public was going to see any conceptual designs prior to the next hearing.

What did seem clear to me at the hearing was that DOT had dodged their obligations to consult with MTAB and the coastal communities served by the ferry system. Just because they worked themselves into a hole and now don't have the funds to build the product of a public process, doesn't mean they should make a unilateral decision to revert to an older plan.

I hope you can hold DOT to a correct public process. I appreciated the questions you asked last Thursday. Richard Stokes, Juneau resident since 1971.

From: Kathleen Menke ci@akmk.com
Haines, AK
Original via email 1/20/2013

Dear Senator Egan and Rep. Wilson: (and copied to others on the Transportation Committees in the Senate and House):

Please include this written testimony as my official record of testimony before the Transportation Committee, as next Thursday afternoon I will be preparing to board the ferry to Juneau and will be unable to testify in person.

We, in Haines, appreciate the questions and oversight of the House Transportation Committee. I was one of the people watching from live videoconference your last meeting.

Items necessary for the Committee to address are public process, substantive issues such as carry capacity and safety, reliability, and flexibility, and costs.

I address each here below as a twenty year resident of Haines and a thirty-year traveler of the Alaska Marine Highway.

#1 Public process

Public process is not being followed on appointments to oversight of AMH. The public being served requires that intent of state statute be applied with regard to appointment of Director, or Deputy Commissioner, or one accountable person in charge of AMH. The current change of organization actually makes no one clearly accountable or answerable to the public. That was clear at your last meeting when Reuben Yost said little, Pat Kemp alluded to the Governor (but not to another actually pulling many of the strings--Robin Taylor), and John Falvey was asked to speak on operations but was given neither title nor authority over decision making.

Following is an e-mail exchange between Robin Taylor and Pat Kemp that clearly shows decisions are being made without regard to public process. If our legislators won't ensure public process is followed and that we have one person clearly accountable for decisions made regarding the Alaska Marine Highway, who will? Clearly not our Governor.

Having Robin Taylor calling the shots out of the eye of any public accountability is disturbing. Questions should be asked as to why Mike Nuessl was asked to resign after Pat Kemp was appointed? Why someone with no ferry experience (Reuben Yost) is now the Deputy Director over the AMH? And about the Parnell, Taylor, Kemp, Yost avenue of communications with each other but not with the public? At the very least our legislators should be ensuring adequate public process.

----- Original Message -----

From: taylork13@comcast.net

To: Pat J Kemp (DOT)

Cc: al johnson ; John Sandor ; Ernie Christian

Sent: Tuesday, January 15, 2013 3:28 PM

Subject: Re:

Dear Pat:

The shuttle ferries is the only way to go and if we only built 30 miles of connecting road we could make the whole system ten times as efficient and generate a lot more revenue. ie: Haines to Cascade, point base the ferry in Haines and it can make two round trips per day morning and evening working only a ten hour day. Please revisit the Taylor plan for connecting roads and shuttle ferries it will work. I'd love to help you on this one.

I don't know if you are aware of it but last January 16-17, 2012, the entire electrical grid for southern southeastern Alaska was maxed out for two days! The only thing that kept it from crashing was that each town Petersburg, Wrangell and Ketchikan all turned off those municipal facilities which they had converted from diesel to electricity and put them back on diesel. Thus all the swimming pools, municipal and school buildings went back on diesel heat. The system was maxed out at 42 megawatts and thank God all systems worked and there was no failure. We have added significant additional electrical load to the system in the last year and already Ketchikan is paying huge diesel surcharges as they are operating the diesel --Bailey power plant already -- they ran out of hydro power a lot earlier than expected. I'm told that Petersburg has already put one new "Cat in a Can" diesel generator on line and has ordered another. Pat, Southern southeastern is out of power and has no new generation even on the drawing board, as they continue to hold meetings and debate who will own and who will operate facilities that they only dream of building. All of which they believe will be funded by large state or federal grants. They don't understand that NO Money is available or likely to come their way.

The key to our economic future is cheap reliable energy and without it----- tell the last guy leaving town to turn off the lights. The only way that new generation will be developed is if there is a market to sell the excess power into and to buy needed power from when we run low. The only corridor for access into southern Southeastern Alaska is the Bradfield! The federal law (T-lue) requires the Feds to give Alaska the corridor as soon as we survey it and delineate its boundaries. This corridor should accommodate a road, pipeline and electrical intertie. Once the right of way has been conveyed from the feds to the state, the State of Alaska, need only grant permits and the intertie will be built by the private sector! Just like the Alaska Pipeline was built without state or federal funds and without the huge cost overruns and delays that would result if we waited for the government to fund, design and build it for us. The Canadians are building the new powerline up Hy.37 and down to the Forest-Kerr (run of river hydro project) on the Iskut. That puts the North American Electrical grid within 50 miles of Tyee Lake via the Bradfield Corridor.

I have met with Valard Const. (The contractor building the Hy 37 powerline) They are ready and willing to not only build the intertie to Alaska they are willing to help finance the project. I have also met with Puget Sound energy and they are also interested as is AP&T, and a whole series of other hydro developers. Pat we need to have the Bradfield corridor surveyed as soon as possible. It is a prerequisite that must occur before any new development of electrical energy can take place. Please let me know how I might assist you in getting this project (surveying the corridor) off the ground. Robin

From: "Pat J Kemp (DOT)" <pat.kemp@alaska.gov>
To: taylork13@comcast.net
Sent: Friday, January 11, 2013 9:11:21 PM
Subject: Re:

Hey Robin. It is really good to hear from you. Yeah, I'm back and it's a great opportunity to do some things. One of the first things we did was change this Alaska Class Ferry back to the shuttle ferries we envisioned. It started out as a shuttle then changed to an oversized Aurora that does nothing for us. So, right off the bat there's controversy, oh well. Hope you and Kay are doing well, stay out of trouble, haha. Pat

On Jan 11, 2013, at 7:19 PM, "taylork13@comcast.net" <taylork13@comcast.net> wrote:

Dear Pat:

Great to hear you got the DOT job. Now lets build the Bradfield Road, and Intertie. Best of luck Robin

#2 Substantive issues on the real need for the 350-foot, Alaska-class ferry or two or three more clones existing mainliner ferries.

Safety, reliability, and carrying capacity are essential to the health, safety, and economic stability of our SE Alaska communities. Flexibility for the entire AMH system can best be served by additional Alaska-class/mainliner ferries.

The health and safety of our children, elders, pets, and citizens of SE Alaska require no less than the 350-foot, Alaska-class ferry be built. Without clear safety and reliability and capacity, the economies of our SE Alaska communities is going to suffer. Last January I had a critically ill dog. The planes were not flying. The LeConte was cancelled. It was three days before I could get to Juneau on a ferry with the dog who subsequently died. It could just as easily been a person.

I recently was aboard the Taku with several regional wrestling teams from SE, heading from Juneau to Haines. Teams were from Metlakatla, Wrangell, Yakutat and elsewhere. The Taku is 352 feet. As we rounded the bend from Juneau heading north after a pleasant breakfast, we started rocking and rolling. Before long, the Captain announced, "Absolutely do not go out on the outer decks. We are locking down the elevator. Find something that is bolted down and hang on. We are in for some weather." Indeed we were in for five long hours of 70 knot winds and 14 foot waves. Most wrestlers and others, including myself, remained curled up on the floor somewhere, hanging on tightly to the nearest bolted down seat for the entire hard, hard ride that ensued.

Anyone who thinks anything less than a 350-foot, Alaska class ferry, will meet the safety and reliability needs of weather in the Upper Lynn Canal, or our capacity needs in the summer and frequently other times, really doesn't know what they are talking about.

As Senator Egan stated, any open-deck design is a recipe for failure. We already also know that the Fairweather and LeConte are not reliable for weather conditions in the Upper Lynn Canal.

#3 The cost factor seems to be a strawman, as Governor Parnell sent back to the feds money our Congressional delegation secured for the funding of this 350-foot, Alaska-class ferry.

In addition, if we are to be committed to picking one ship builder in Alaska for a project, then we must be willing to accept the cost overruns that will inevitably occur.

Third there are no actual costs tied to the change to smaller shuttle ferries. And budget and costs, as we learned from Comm. Kemp, are "fungible". Sometimes they include extra design costs, sometimes not. Sometimes they include costs for additional terminals or terminal modifications needed for the shuttle ferries, sometimes not.

We need to invest in the ferries that will meet our needs.

Thank you for your open-public processes and for taking testimony from Alaska communities affected by the recent decision by the Parnell Administration to abruptly change without public process. Please urge the Governor to restore both public process and the 350-foot, Alaska-class ferry that was developed through public process.

Regards, Kathleen Menke, Haines

Kathleen M.K. Menke
Crystal Images Photography and Publishing
Haines, Alaska
<http://www.akmk.com>

Dana Owen

From: george figdor <figdor@aptalaska.net>
Sent: Friday, January 18, 2013 12:59 PM
To: Rep. Peggy Wilson; Representative_Eric_Feige@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Representative_Craig_Johnson@legis.state.ak.us; Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Anna_Fairclough@legis.state.ak.us; Sen. Click Bishop; Senator_Hollis_French@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Support Alaska-class Ferries
Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged
Categories: Green Category

Dear Members of the Senate and the House Transportation Committees:

i urge you to fight for the Alaska-class ferry and reject the governor's slight of hand in trying to undermine our ferry system and incrementally impose a road on communities that have opposed it for decades.

I am a 40 year resident of Haines. While people in Haines do not often agree on issues, improved ferry service is one of those things that virtually everyone in this town sees eye to eye on. Like most residents of Southeast communities, we love our ferries and over the years have found the service pretty darn reliable, despite often harsh weather. Much community input went into the concept of the Alaska-class ferry.

Marine transportation is basic to the culture of Southeast. And we are proud to have this well run mass transit system in place, when so many other places in our nation are struggling to retrofit road-based transportation with mass transit.

George Figdor
Haines, Alaska

Dana Owen

From: jennifer talley <mellingbar@gmail.com>
Sent: Friday, January 18, 2013 7:38 AM
To: Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us
Cc: Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Rep. Peggy Wilson
Subject: Alaska State Ferries

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Green Category

Hello,

My name is Jennifer Talley. I am a nurse who resides in Haines and works in Juneau. The ferries are an integral part of, not only my life, but of several others who also commute to work from smaller Southeast Alaska communities.

Winter weather in Upper Lynn Canal can be hideous. There were a few times this winter when the ferry had to cancel due to weather and that was the LeConte. Originally, the Fairweather was "designed" to do sailings in the Upper Lynn Canal and that has not worked.

Obviously, Governor Parnell has never ridden the ferry in the winter, or he would not have unilaterally made a decision to change the design of them.

This is a bad mistake and should not happen. There is no need to waste money on a ferry that will not be able to function in the winter, what is the point?

Our fleet of ferries is aging and they need work.

The ferry system is one of the best things about Southeast Alaska. It is part of the fabric of the culture and should be a priority to maintain. The ferries have also seen a steady rise in ridership.

As my representatives, I would like you to fight to maintain the original design of the Alaska Class Ferry. I want something that is reliable for me to get back and forth to work. I want funds going to the ferry system to be well spent and thought out. I want money to go into a transportation system that already exists.

Thank you for your time,

Jennifer Talley
PO Box 1086
Haines, Alaska
99827
907 314 0864

Dana Owen

From: Nick Olmsted <olmstedkemp@yahoo.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 17, 2013 3:48 PM
To: Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Alaska Marine Highway

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Green Category

Dear Senator Egan,

As a 35-year resident of Tenakee Springs on Chichagof Island, I believe I can offer some insight regarding winter travel in Southeast Alaska. I've been aboard the Le Conte many times when screaming wind and heavy icing caused the wide-eyed passengers to say almost in unison "I wouldn't want to be on a boat even one inch smaller!" Typical winter storms in Lynn Canal and Chatham Strait would be an emergency nearly anywhere else in the world.

Nothing can replace a large, displacement hull vessel for safe, reliable transportation. The idea of a small, open deck ferry would be laughable if it were not so dangerous.

We have come to depend on ferry service for our island community. I don't care if the ferry schedule is frequent or convenient. I just want some fixed points in the calendar in order to schedule a dentist appointment, a wedding or an employment obligation. I have no objection to paying state employees to provide that service, any more than I object to my federal tax dollars supporting the US Coast Guard. Government exists to provide services that the private sector cannot.

Please press the "delete" button on Governor Parnell's harebrained scheme of an open-deck ferry, and reinstate the product of years of planning and discussion.

Sincerely,
Molly Kemp

Dana Owen

From: Bill Shattenberg <william@anchoralaska.com>
Sent: Thursday, January 17, 2013 2:19 PM
To: Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Lynn Canal ferries

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Green Category

Senator Dennis Egan

I would like to voice some concerns regarding the Lynn Canal ferry plan.

1, A new ferry terminal at Cascade Point would be about forty miles out of Juneau. An estimated cab fare for a walk on passenger to downtown Juneau would be about \$90.00 minimum. A walk on fare Haines to Juneau is \$37.00. A air flight Haines to Juneau is about \$125.00 This is not affordable transportation.

2, The State is already looking at vanishing oil dollars. Having to build, maintain, and manage two ferry terminals both on the North end of Juneau is not practical.

3, While the travel time may be less on board the ship the overall time with getting to and from the terminal will offset the shorter boat trip. What is the point of building something new that will not work better than what is already in place.

Basically it looks like DOT and the Governor want to build roads regardless of what local Alaskans may want or need.

Thank you for your time.

Bill Shattenberg

5362 Commercial Blvd.

Juneau, Alaska 99801

Ph.907-780-3690

Cell 907-321-3691

Fax 907-780-3692

E-mail bill@anchoralaska.com

"The ordaining of laws in favor of one part of the nation, to the prejudice and oppression of another, is certainly the most erroneous and mistaken policy. An equal dispensation of protection, rights, privileges, and advantages, is what every part is entitled to, and ought to enjoy." Benjamin Franklin, 1774.

Dana Owen

From: Nina Chordas <nchordas@fastmail.fm>
Sent: Thursday, January 17, 2013 11:00 AM
To: Sen. Dennis Egan
Subject: ferries

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Green Category

Dear Senator Egan,

I was unable to open the link in your message about hearings regarding the AK State ferries, so thought I'd drop you a line to express my concerns. I have lived and worked in Alaska for the past 11 years, and consider the ferries of the Alaska Marine Highway to be one of the state's best and possibly most under-rated and under-supported assets. The sudden proposal for smaller ferries that recently came from the Governor's office strikes me as problematic at the very least. I'm deeply bothered by the high-handed manner in which plans that have been carefully and thoughtfully laid over a period of time by groups charged with working on a specific issue can get swept away in the blink of an eye and replaced by something that seems much less thought through or even beneficial to users. Who benefits from these changes? I don't think they are being made with the average ferry passenger in mind. I strongly support you in the advocacy for ferries that actually meet the needs of SE Alaska and its people.

Thank you for your work!
Nina Chordas

--

Nina Chordas M.A., Ph.D.
Associate Professor of English
Humanities Department Chair
University of Alaska Southeast, Juneau
nychordas@fastmail.fm
907-796-6407

Dana Owen

From: John Hudson <jhudson@gci.net>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 10:14 PM
To: Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: ferries

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Green Category

Dear Senator,

Safe, comfortable and reliable ferry service in Lynn Canal is essential for local and out of state travels. I support the legislatures work to build a new Alaska Class ferry for this route and others.

John Hudson
Juneau

Dana Owen

From: Allison Smith <allison_theresa@yahoo.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 6:44 PM
To: Rep. Peggy Wilson; "Representative_Eric_Feige@legis.state.ak.us"; Rep. Lynn Gattis; "Representative_Craig_Johnson@legis.state.ak.us"; "Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us"; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; "Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us"; "Senator_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us"; Sen. Click Bishop; "Senator_Hollis_French@legis.state.ak.us"
Subject: Partially open-deck ferries...in Lynn Canal?
Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged
Categories: Green Category

Dear Legislators,

I am writing to share my strong opposition to Governor Parnell's decision, in which he ignored public input, deciding that two smaller, partially open-deck ferries should operate in Lynn Canal rather than one large, safe, reliable ferry - already approved by the legislature. First, I take issue with the governor circumventing the public process. Second, smaller ferries will not address the needs of Alaskans, businesses, and tourists who rely on the ferry to travel Lynn Canal. Conditions that can occur in Lynn Canal, such as strong winds and big waves make smaller, partially open-decked ferries unsafe and unreliable. It is not a sound use of state funds to purchase ferries or a good public safety decision.

Thank you in advance for getting us back on track with one seaworthy Alaska-class ferry for Lynn Canal.

Sincerely,

Allison Smith
12175 Glacier Hwy. B3
Juneau, AK 99801
907-586-1101

Dana Owen

From: Maggie Osborne <magoz31@hotmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 5:17 PM
To: Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Changes to the Alaska Class Ferry

Follow Up Flag: Flag for follow up
Flag Status: Flagged

Categories: Green Category

Dear Senator Egan;

I am a resident and regular patron of the Alaska Marine Highway. I have always enjoyed and prefer travel via ferry. Currently, I am very concerned about the recent decision to change the design of the Alaska Class ferry. Travel in Southeast Alaska during the winter is difficult enough with ferries currently in service. Weather conditions and mechanical issues already lead to delays and/or cancellations on occasion. The decision by Governor Parnell to change the design for the Alaska Class ferry to smaller, partially open deck ferries is alarming to say the least. Residents of Southeast Alaska deserve better than to be ignored. Safe, reliable transportation is all the residents of Southeast ask for. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
Margaret A. Osborne
PO Box 192
Skagway, Alaska

Dana Owen

From: sean rielly <srielly@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 4:31 PM
To: Rep. Peggy Wilson; Representative_Eric_Feige@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Lynn Gattis; Representative_Craig_Johnson@legis.state.ak.us; Representative_Bob_Lynn@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Jonathan Kreiss-Tomkins; Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Fred_Dyson@legis.state.ak.us; Senator_Anna_Fairclough@legis.state.ak.us; Sen. Click Bishop; Senator_Hollis_French@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Re: unilateral change in direction of the Alaska Class Ferry

Good Afternoon Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am writing in regards to Gov Parnell's unilateral change in direction of the Alaska Class Ferry.

My concerns are that smaller, partially open-deck ferries operating in Lynn Canal would be unsafe and would not meet Juneau's access needs unlike the large, safe, reliable ferries that have been approved by legislature. The current larger closed deck vessels have proved to be seaworthy and safe in meeting Juneau's Access Needs especially with our incimate weather and seas it is wise to have this seaworthy vessel.

If the Juneau Access Project "The Road" is completed it would be closed half of the year due to snow, avalanche danger among other hazards. During this time of year (legislative session) it is our most incimate weather when we would need the safe seaworthy larger closed deck ferry to meet our transportation needs.

I am thankful for the Joint Transportation Committee Hearing that is being held so that the people of SE Alaska and Legislatures can discuss this matter further.

I do not support unilateral decisions that circumvent the public process, especially when it is in regards to safe transportation within the Great State of Alaska.

Thank you for your time and work

Take care,
Sean Rielly

I believe in Safe Ferries

Dana Owen

From: Bern Savikko <bsavikko@gmail.com>
Sent: Wednesday, January 16, 2013 10:27 AM
To: Senator_Dennis_Egan@legis.state.ak.us; Rep. Beth Kerttula;
representative_cathy_munoz@legis.state.ak.us
Subject: Kemp fires AMHS director and appoints Reuben Yost
Attachments: Kemp fires AMHS director and hires Reuben Yost 1-16-13.pdf

Dear Senator Egan and Representatives Kertulla and Munoz,

I have attached a letter that I hope you can find time to review to add a perspective to the recent developments within Alaska DOT/PF. Once again, I worry about the Alaska Marine Highway System's ability to "stay afloat" in today's political climate.

Thank you for your time and service,

Sincerely,

Bern Savikko

Senator Egan, Representative Kertulla, and Representative Munoz,

I wrote a rather lengthy letter to you back in mid-December regarding the Alaska Class Ferry. The recent firing of Captain Neussl by Pat Kemp further supports my opinion that the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) is constantly being (mis)directed by political decisions instead of sound planning. The Alaska class ferry project has become another political issue instead of a basic transportation decision with political force prevailing over a sound engineering process.

The recent change dictated by the Governor and supported by Pat Kemp is an attempt to change the Alaska class ferry project to a Juneau Access project. I worked with Pat Kemp for years and he is a much respected engineer and a great guy. However, now that he is in a political position, he is allowing his passion for the Juneau Access project to influence his objectivity on the Alaska class ferry debate. My assumption is that Captain Neussl supported the original Alaska class design and it conflicted with Pat's long range plan to have a road up Lynn Canal. Pat's attempt (supported by the Governor) to change the type of ferry from one that is designed to service Lynn Canal efficiently to two that will better work as shuttles between Katzehin and Haines is not what AMHS has requested. The recent appointment of Reuben Yost (who I also respect) is a step to add further support to the Juneau Access project at the expense of AMHS.

The Juneau Access project has been presented by DOT in the past as the preferred option over improved ferry service in upper Lynn Canal. It has been debated by pro-road and pro-ferry advocates and to date the "preferred alternative" is still in question. I don't believe that this is a highway vs. ferry issue. The real issue is; what is the proper balance between roads and ferry routes to sustainably serve Southeast Alaska? Part of the answer is an objective perspective of the Juneau Access project and a properly designed vessel for Lynn Canal service.

Another issue that I mentioned in my previous letter is the loss of Berth II in Ketchikan. Pat has given AMHS direction to design and build a replacement berth in Ward Cove so the shipyard can have Berth II. As I stated previously, this is not a simple or inexpensive task and is in direct conflict with AMHS operations and their ability to efficiently service the busy Ketchikan hub. I would imagine Captain Neussl also had a different opinion on this subject than that presented by Pat Kemp and the newly appointed Reuben Yost will follow Pat's lead more easily. I respect both Pat and Reuben as long term DOT employees, but their present political positions and affiliation with the Juneau Access project add a distorted perspective to AMHS needs.

I will keep this letter short, but please feel free to email me if I can be of assistance on this subject. I have a fairly busy retirement schedule, but I would be willing to do research or provide information as required to help AMHS push through these difficult times.

Best Regards,

Bern Savikko


bsavikko@gmail.com