

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA  
February 28, 2004  
9:35 a.m.

**TAPE(S) 04-7, 8**

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator John Cowdery, Co-Chair  
Senator Thomas Wagoner, Co-Chair  
Senator Donny Olson

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Gene Therriault  
Senator Georgianna Lincoln

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

^OVERVIEW OF THE KNIK ARM CROSSING

**CO-CHAIR JOHN COWDERY** convened the meeting of the Senate Transportation Standing Committee at 9:35 a.m. Present at the call to order was Senator Olson, Co-Chair Wagoner, and Co-Chair Cowdery.

**SUMMARY OF INFORMATION**

MR. GEORGE P.WUERCH, Chairman of the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority began the overview with a PowerPoint presentation. This presentation can be viewed at [www.knikarmbridge.com](http://www.knikarmbridge.com). He discussed the following three main issues in the presentation:

- What it is
- It is a lengthy process ... where we are today
- History and substance of the project.

MR. WUERCH emphasized the importance of the construction of public infrastructure so that growth, economy, and quality of life can continue in the private sector. There are six major identified transportation projects in Alaska, and the Knik Arm Crossing is on that list. KABATA (Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority) is a public corporation created by the Legislature. It is the first toll authority in Alaska, but there are over 100 in the continental U.S.

MR. WUERCH's presentation addressed the following issues: what, where, when, history, environmental considerations, obstacles, and toll. What: connects ports of Anchorage to the Mat-Su; railroad-compatible design; below the bluff on the Anchorage side, access from existing roads; operates as a toll bridge; earthfill causeway on each side and piling from deep water for the bridge. When: design and construct; a four-year process; permitting takes a long time, so no estimate. "When" depends on TEA-21 authorization money. Environmental Considerations: belugas, fish, unknowns.... Obstacles: Money; hopefully \$600 million from the federal government can be secured, with a match of 9 percent. The 9 percent match could be made up of small appropriations, or sale of state GO bonds or toll authority revenue bonds. This gets it built. After that, tolls pay the operation and maintenance costs. Toll: toll would pay the operations and maintenance, estimated to be at \$1.5 million per year. Vehicle counts would most likely be low the first few years. Trucks moving cargo would be charged more, and would use the bridge. Estimated toll for passenger vehicles may be \$5 per vehicle.

Other points of interest mentioned included planning into the future, a bike trail along the bridge, and a railroad corridor. A railroad corridor would not necessarily be a part of the toll bridge, but the Authority could manage it.

There was a public comment period after the presentation. Both Channel 11 and Channel 2 ran news stories on the hearing at the end of the day.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:45 a.m.

NOTE: The meeting was recorded. A copy of the tape(s) may be obtained by contacting the Senate Records Office at State Capitol, Room 3, Juneau, Alaska 99801 (mailing address), (907) 465-2870, and after adjournment of the second session of the Twenty-Third Alaska State Legislature this information may be obtained by contacting the Legislative Reference Library at (907) 465-3808.