

COMMITTEE MEETING:

DISCUSSION with

FED. HWY. ADMIN.

B. MOREHEAD

3-16-87

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

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JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
907-465-3800

May, 1988

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Mary Van Nimwegen

House Transportation:

3/16/87

Alaska State Legislature



House of Representatives

Committee on Transportation

Rep. Bette Cato, Chairman

Pouch V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811
(907) 465-4858

March 16, 1987

FOR TODAY'S MEETING YOU HAVE:

A FOLDER THAT INCLUDES:

- * a statement from Mr. Barry Morehead, Division Administrator for the Federal Highway Administration Alaska Division
- * a list of potential questions for Mr. Morehead

ALASKA - FEDERAL-AID HIGHWAY PROGRAM

I appreciate the opportunity to meet with you.

I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you some of our concerns and problem areas and see if there are some ways you can help resolve them or at least be aware of what we would hope to see in the immediate future. In our office here in Juneau we have 17 people. We work directly with your Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) personnel in advancing the Federal-Aid Highway Program throughout the State - one of the areas that must be addressed is the ever increasing number of projects that may require Federal-aid highway funding. Where I think you and your committee could really help is to explain to your colleagues is, there is a set amount of Federal-Aid Highway funding that is made available to Alaska each year. This has been about \$150 million for the last few years. I don't know what future levels will be but I'm sure they will be in the \$130-150 million range. The important part is the State will receive a fixed amount and although your overall needs now far exceed our program, based on projects or improvements Alaska DOT&PF has been directed to develop, that fixed amount will not change. So please, at every opportunity you get explain to your colleagues and your constituents there is a fixed amount of Federal-aid highway funding coming to the State and if someone comes up with a high priority project and everyone decides to advance that project, a like dollar amount of projects must be deleted for that year.

Commissioner Hickey can give you a better idea but I understand the various Regions are working on about \$1.5 billion worth of projects. What we have asked for is a listing of projects or phases of projects proposed for Federal-aid highway funding. We have asked for this listing to be by fiscal year and to use an anticipated Federal-aid dollar amount in the \$150 million range. When we receive this listing we will be able to concentrate our limited resources to the most current year proposals and should eliminate our involvement in projects that will not require Federal-aid highway funding.

Mark and his staff are working on a six-year transportation obligation plan which may meet our needs without any duplication of effort. From our initial discussions there will be an identifier as to which projects are proposed for Federal-aid highway funding.

Another area that really needs to be addressed is how best to handle a project that was estimated to cost say \$1.5 million and a year or two later, when design is in a more final state, the cost is estimated at \$1.55 million. I guess what I need is to better understand your line item funding and what flexibilities Mark and his people have. What would seem to be a rather insignificant dollar amount causes us some real problems - what normally happens is a request to delete items like lighting or guardrail, to reduce

the length of the project, or something similar. We aren't usually too receptive to those type requests, since the traffic normally dictates the type of facility needed as well as recognized safety features to accommodate that traffic. It would seem to me it should be simple to say, "please add \$50,000 to the estimated cost of this project which our most current estimate indicates is needed." The process of doing this must be more cumbersome than I would have thought since this seems to be the last option the State people want to pursue rather than the first.

What would be wrong with setting up a project adjustment account of say \$2-5 million to handle this type situation - you could get an accounting of how any withdrawals were handled, i.e., what project, what caused, etc., which would stress accountability and at the same time keep projects moving. Like I said, I really don't understand your funding process - possibly you have a method to handle this and the project managers need to be told how it works.

I guess the final area I want to discuss is maintenance. Our very broad criteria for participating in the Federal-Aid Highway Program is that a State must have a highway department with adequate powers and be suitably equipped and organized to carry out the requirements of the program. The other requirement is that State must agree to maintain or cause to be maintained any improvement which utilized Federal-aid highway funding. What I am

going to need to know is which routes, if any, do you propose to no longer maintain. The route that comes to my mind is on Prince of Wales Island. The route called Control Lake to Thorne Bay. There is an active construction contract there now with several other phases planned to get it up to minimum State standards. If the State elects not to maintain these facilities, we should terminate the improvements. I have asked Alaska DOT&PF to respond as soon as possible and their response will depend on what the legislature and Governor decide.

Anyway, that's all I had, any other questions?



Barry F. Morehead
Division Administrator

QUESTIONS FOR MR. BARRY MOOREHEAD - FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

1. WHAT IS THE CURRENT STATUS WITH THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY FUNDING?
2. WHICH FEDERAL VERSION, HOUSE OR SENATE IS LIKELY TO PASS?
3. WHAT WILL BE THE OVERALL IMPACT IF THE HOUSE VERSION IS ADOPTED?
4. HOW IS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION AND THE STATE OF ALASKA?
5. HAVE THE PROBLEMS BEEN CORRECTED, ARE THE CORRECTIONS MADE ACCEPTABLE TO FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION?
6. WHY DID THIS PROBLEM GET TO THE STAGE OF BILLINGS NOT BEING ACCEPTED? WAS THE STATE OF ALASKA GIVEN PLENTY OF NOTICE PRIOR TO THIS ACTION THAT IT'S BILLING METHODS WERE UNACCEPTABLE?
7. SHOULD THE DEPARTMENT AND THE STATE DECIDE TO ADOPT THE PROPOSED MAINTENANCE PROGRAM IN FY 88, THAT IS, CATEGORIZING THE ROADS AS CLASS 1, CLASS 11 AND CLASS 111 ROADS, WOULD THERE BE ANY IMPACT ON FEDERAL FUNDING BECAUSE OF THIS ACTION?
8. WHAT RECOMMENDATIONS OR SUGGESTIONS DO YOU HAVE TO IMPROVE THE CURRENT SYSTEM?
9. WHAT PERCENTAGE OF FEDERAL HIGHWAY FUNDING GOES TOWARD THE SECONDARY ROAD SYSTEM?
10. DURING YOUR PROPOSED TOUR OF ALASKA THIS SUMMER WITH MR. RILEY SNELL, WHAT AREAS DO YOU INTEND TO LOOK AT?

