

APPENDIX I

Public Hearing Transcripts

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KNIK ARM CROSSING DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

AND

DRAFT SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY

Monday, October 16, 2006

Captain Cook Hotel

Anchorage, Alaska

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

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Session One

Commencing at 12:00 p.m.

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 JUSTICE BURKE: Good afternoon, ladies and
3 gentlemen. I'd like to welcome everyone here today
4 to the public hearing on the Knik Arm Crossing
5 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, Section 4(F)
6 Evaluation. This hearing is sponsored by the
7 Federal Highway Administration and the Knik Arm
8 Bridge and Toll Authority, a public corporation
9 municipality of the State of Alaska.

10 This hearing is taking place, for the record,
11 at the Hotel Captain Cook in the municipality of
12 Anchorage. The date is October 16th, 2006. The
13 current time is four minutes after 12:00, noon.

14 My name is Edmond Burke. I'm a retired
15 member of the Alaska Supreme Court. I served just
16 over 23 years in the State Judiciary. Four of
17 those years as a Superior Court judge in the Third
18 Judicial District, and the remaining 19 years as a
19 Justice and a one-time Chief Justice of the Alaska
20 Supreme Court. I am retired from the standpoint of
21 judicial service. I do, however, practice law, let
22 me assure you, on a very limited basis with a
23 gentleman named Don Bauermeister. Don does most of
24 the law practice and I pull an order from time to
25 time but my principal occupation now involves

1 grandchildren and fly fishing.

2 I have no real interest in this proposal or
3 what's to be discussed here today. I have not been
4 involved in the project in any way, shape, or form,
5 and I will not be from this point forward. My only
6 role here is to conduct this hearing today. And
7 although my title, as you can see from the table,
8 is hearing officer, that perhaps suggests more than
9 it should.

10 I will conduct this meeting, but I will make
11 no findings; I will not be involved in any of the
12 findings of fact or conclusions of law that are
13 necessary or related to this project in any way.
14 My sole function is to conduct the hearing fairly
15 and in an orderly manner so that persons having
16 something to say have an opportunity to do so in a
17 setting where they can be heard and their views can
18 be expressed.

19 I have not formed nor have I expressed any
20 opinion concerning this project or wisdom of it or
21 lack thereof and I don't intend to do that in the
22 future. The only person I might discuss it with is
23 my wife at some future date and she would be the
24 first to tell you that I don't tell her anything,
25 so that probably won't happen.

1 I am going to be assisted here today by a
2 young lady seated over there to the right, Valerie
3 Martinez. She is with Alaska Stenotype. She is a
4 certified shorthand reporter and is preparing a
5 verbatim transcript of everything said here today.
6 That will be turned into an official transcript for
7 this hearing, which at some future date will be
8 available to interested persons.

9 As most of you know, the Knik Arm Crossing
10 Project refers to a new vehicular bridge crossing
11 the Knik Arm connecting the Matanuska-Susitna
12 Borough in the municipality of Anchorage. The
13 Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement and
14 Section 4(f) Evaluation, or Draft EIS presents an
15 analysis of the alternatives: Human, natural and
16 environmental impact assessments, and draft
17 mitigation.

18 This brings us to the stated purpose of this
19 hearing and it's important that we clearly
20 understand it. The purpose is to provide members
21 of the public an opportunity to present their views
22 and comments to federal and State officials who has
23 responsibility for Draft EIS and to fulfill the
24 requirements of the National Environmental Policy
25 Act to form a hearing such as this. The hearing

1 also foretells certain regulatory requirements from
2 both the Federal Highway Administration and the
3 Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
4 regarding project development.

5 For the record, the Draft Environmental
6 Impact Statement is titled the Knik Arm Crossing
7 Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f)
8 Evaluation. The federal project number is
9 HDP-CA-0001(277). The State project number is
10 56047/58142.

11 There is certain government officials seated
12 with me at the front table to listen to your
13 testimony and they are, to my immediate right,
14 Ms. Edrie Vinson, Environmental Project Manager for
15 the Federal Highway Administration, United States
16 Department of Transportation; just to her right,
17 Mr. Dale Paulson, Deputy Executive Director of
18 Project Development on the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll
19 Authority; and to my far right is Mr. Henry
20 Springer, Executive Director of the Knik Arm Bridge
21 and Toll Authority.

22 Because the purpose of the hearings is to
23 receive your views and comments, no exchanges
24 between these officials and the persons testifying
25 will be permitted. In order to provide those

1 wishing to testify in the entire time allotted to
2 them, answers to any questions posed will be
3 recorded along with everything else and there will
4 be a response to those questions at a later date.

5 I have instructed the people at the table
6 that they're not to engage in any dialogue with
7 anyone, and if that effort should be made, then I
8 am going to step in and admonish them. We are here
9 for the sole purpose of allowing members of the
10 public to step to the microphone, within their
11 allotted time, to make their views known and to
12 make a record of those comments one way or the
13 other.

14 As you can see from the public hearing
15 handout that you received -- if you haven't, those
16 are available outside at the next door -- the
17 hearing will take place over two days. Today,
18 October 16, the hearing will be -- this hearing
19 will continue until 3:00 p.m. this afternoon. The
20 second hearing will begin at 4:30 p.m. this
21 afternoon and go until 9:00 p.m. this evening. A
22 similar schedule will apply in further hearings to
23 be held in the City of Wasilla on Wednesday,
24 October the 18th. Again, there will be a session,
25 12:00 to 3:00 and then 4:30 to 9:00. Those will be

1 held at the Best Western Lake Lucille Inn on the
2 same schedule.

3 On both days if at 9:00 p.m. people present
4 have not had the opportunity to testify, the
5 hearing officer will announce -- that being me in
6 this case, will announce the -- will probably
7 recess briefly to consider the matter and then
8 we'll determine what additional time and the
9 adequate additional time those further statements
10 will be heard, whether it be for a time beyond 9:00
11 p.m. or perhaps at some future date. In no event
12 will any of these hearings last beyond 11:00 p.m.
13 on either day.

14 An open house has been scheduled here from
15 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., both here and in Wasilla.
16 That open house is taking place next door in the
17 adjoining room. Most of you have probably been in
18 there already. Project team members are staffing
19 the open house and are available to answer
20 questions about the Draft Environmental Impact
21 Statement.

22 In your packet of handouts there's a blue
23 sheet and on one side it describes an overview of
24 the public hearing, including the general ground
25 rules, and on the other side it describes specific

1 ground rules. I'd like to go over the general
2 rules with you and I will be reading them into the
3 record.

4 The first is that mutual respect, courtesy,
5 and patience are the key concepts that will guide
6 this hearing. We want to maintain an atmosphere
7 where everyone feels comfortable and welcomed
8 regardless of his or her position on the project.
9 We want everyone to feel free to testify and feel
10 comfortable while they're testifying. Please keep
11 your comments brief, clear, and to the point, and
12 please don't interrupt another person while they're
13 speaking.

14 We ask that you remain quiet so others and
15 the court reporter over here can hear, which is
16 essential as she prepares an accurate transcript
17 and nothing makes the court reporter's or a
18 shorthand reporter's life more miserable than
19 having two or three people talking at once. It's
20 simply impossible for her to maintain an accurate
21 record with that going on. That's why in the
22 courtroom sometimes even before the judge gets into
23 the fight, the court reporter will stop everything
24 and say, ladies and gentlemen, I can't do two
25 things at once, please speak one at a time.

1 I'm pleased to see that there are no signs or
2 banners. Those, of course, are not to be posted.
3 This is a place for people to come and to state
4 their views, not a place to be -- the advocacy has
5 to occur in some other setting.

6 A table has been provided in the lobby for
7 any information prepared by members of the public.
8 This information must clearly note who prepared and
9 provided the information. And speakers, we have
10 already said, should refrain from addressing the
11 audience or asking for audience participation or
12 participation addressing questions to the people
13 seated up here with me. They are here to listen
14 and only to listen.

15 It's essentially and fundamentally fair that
16 a comfortable atmosphere be maintained to encourage
17 testimony and expressing differing views freely and
18 openly without any fear of intimidation,
19 recrimination, and criticism and that all persons
20 wishing to be heard are in no way discouraged from
21 presenting their views or comments.

22 I would ask, if you have them, to turn off
23 any cell phones or pagers or set them to vibrate
24 rather than cutting loose in the middle of the
25 proceeding with a series of chimes or other such

1 things that are common on those gadgets. That goes
2 without saying, that any disruptive behavior is
3 inappropriate and will not be tolerated. I'm happy
4 to say that in 42 years in the courtroom, in one
5 form or another, I rarely have seen any such thing
6 and I have learned that the fellow with the
7 quietest argument is generally the fellow in which
8 people listen to. I'm sure I don't need to ask
9 much more than that. If you observe the rules,
10 we'll get through this just find.

11 The comment period of Draft Environmental
12 Impact Statement extends through October 30, 2006.
13 Any statements of testimony given at this hearing
14 will be recorded and printed in a transcript as I
15 already noted. Written and oral comments will be
16 given equal consideration and will be part of the
17 public record.

18 The final Environmental Impact Statement will
19 include responses to the comments received, and the
20 final Environmental Impact Statement will be
21 available for a 30-day review period before a
22 record of decision is prepared by the Federal
23 Highway Administration.

24 Several handouts are available to help you
25 better understand comment during the hearing,

1 including the public hearing overview and ground
2 rules. The Draft Environmental Impact Statement
3 Public Comment Process Overview, the project
4 newsletter, and extensive information graphics
5 about the project may be reviewed in the open house
6 in the room next door. A copy of the Public
7 Hearing Overview of the ground rules, the Draft
8 Environmental Impact Statement Public Comment
9 Process Overview, and the Open House Overview will
10 be provided to the reporter and may be part of the
11 official hearing transcript.

12 In addition to the four public hearing
13 sessions, public comment on the Draft EIS can be
14 submitted by written form or in written form by
15 mail, fax, hand delivery, or e-mail to Ms. Edrie
16 Vinson at the Federal Highway Administration or
17 Ms. Betty Fauber with the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll
18 Authority. Ms. Vinson's and Ms. Fauber's U.S.
19 mail, fax, and e-mail information are noted on the
20 Draft Environmental Impact Statement Public Comment
21 Process Overview sheet, and the comment sheet. You
22 may also submit written comments tonight in the box
23 at the open house in the room next door.

24 There's a sign-in table just outside the
25 entrance of this room. All persons wishing to

1 testify must sign in and if testifying on behalf of
2 a group, identify the group they represent.

3 During the two days of hearings, each
4 individual will have only one three-minute
5 opportunity to speak either in Anchorage or Mat-Su
6 but not both. Each group or agency will have a
7 five-minute opportunity to present testimony either
8 in Anchorage or in Mat-Su but not both. And only
9 one representative of a group or agency may use the
10 five minutes to speak for that organization.
11 Giving one's time to another individual is not
12 allowed.

13 An individual, group, or agency may submit a
14 more detailed written comment to the hearing record
15 when they testify or later in a submittal to the
16 official comment period record as long as the
17 person, group, or agency submitting written
18 comments are identified on the written comments and
19 they are postmarked only before October 30, 2006.

20 As I previously mentioned, if at 9:00 p.m.
21 people present have not had the opportunity to
22 testify, I will announce at that time after a brief
23 recess, what additional steps will be taken,
24 whether it would be to remain in session for
25 another hour or so or to continue with the matter

1 at some other date.

2 I will call people forward to testify in the
3 order they signed in. When called, of course, a
4 person should step up here to the podium and
5 clearly state and spell their name, give their
6 address, and indicate whether they represent a
7 group or agency. These instructions are also, if
8 you forget them, right on top of the podium so that
9 you can refresh your memory there.

10 Your three to five minutes will not begin
11 until you have stated your name and address after
12 which the stoplight timer will be started. When
13 you have one minute of time remaining, the timer
14 light will blink green; when you have 30 seconds
15 remaining, the timer will turn yellow; and when
16 your time has ended, your timer will turn red. At
17 the end of the time, the official timer, this young
18 lady to my left, will note that fact with a bell,
19 at which point you must terminate your remarks. In
20 keeping with the long-standing tradition of the
21 United States Superior Court, I may stop you even
22 in mid-sentence.

23 Any and all questions about the hearing
24 procedure should be addressed to me as the hearing
25 officer. Although I hasten, again, to point out to

1 you that my title might be otherwise ringmaster or
2 something, but I will have no role in the decision
3 here. I'm simply here to conduct the meeting and
4 that's the limit of my authority.

5 So with that in mind, ladies and gentlemen,
6 now it's time to hear the remarks of individuals
7 who signed up to make a comment. The first of
8 these -- forgive me if I mispronounce your name --
9 is Amy Sharron Bedal. Ma'am, if you will come to
10 the podium. And the next speaker will be David
11 VanHolstyn who can, whenever he is ready, step up
12 to the second podium and be prepared when this
13 young lady's time expires.

14 MS. BEDAL: My name is Amy Sharron Bedal,
15 S-H-A-R-R-O-N; last name, B-E-D-A-L; and I live at
16 914 Boyd Street, Anchorage, Alaska. I have a
17 prepared statement.

18 As both a resident and a landlord on
19 Government Hill, I am greatly disturbed by KABATA's
20 proposal and the Environmental Impact Statement.
21 Both the Degan and Erickson routes represent a dire
22 threat to the very ability of our neighborhood to
23 function as a neighborhood.

24 The EIS correctly notes that the Government
25 Hill residents are likely to be very concerned with

1 the esthetics of the project and protective of park
2 land's abuse on the hill, but what the preparists
3 of the EIS have failed to understand is that just
4 as a forest, it's more than a collection of trees.
5 A neighborhood is more than a collection of homes
6 and businesses.

7 The damage that would be incurred by the
8 Degan or Erickson routes goes well beyond the
9 number of structures and parks that would be
10 bulldozed. It would destroy the very ability of
11 the neighborhood to function as a neighborhood.
12 Simply put, this isn't just about form, it's about
13 function.

14 Many Lower 48 cities destroy the
15 functionality of their downtowns and established
16 neighborhoods back in the '70s and '80s only now to
17 regret their decision. Today they are actively
18 trying to restore what was lost, usually at great
19 expense. One of the benefits of being behind the
20 rest of country is that it gives us an opportunity
21 to learn from their mistakes.

22 Both the Degan and Erickson routes would
23 create a broad swath of unpopulated back-filled
24 land, effectively severing the western hill from
25 the eastern hill. We're already the smallest

1 neighborhood in the city and we can't afford to be
2 subdivided further.

3 Businesses that would lose business access
4 during the prolonged construction wouldn't even be
5 eligible for compensation. This would further
6 widen the path of destruction. I am aware of no
7 other neighborhood that would voluntarily offer to
8 temporarily sacrifice its business district in its
9 effort to maintain community cohesion, but this is
10 exactly what the Government Hill Community Council
11 alternative proposal does. What's even more
12 amazing about our little community is that the
13 business owners themselves have chosen to back the
14 GHCC plan. If that does not impress you, I do not
15 know what will.

16 The most disturbing thing about the EIS
17 proposal is that it did not even consider the
18 Government Hill Community Council proposal. Please
19 do not sacrifice Government Hill on the altar of
20 political and financial expediency. I thank you
21 for your time, your patience, and your open minds.

22 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you.

23 Mr. VanHolstyn, go ahead.

24 MR. VANHOLSTYN: My name is David VanHolstyn,
25 spelled V-A-N, capital H, O-L-S-T-Y-N. And I'm

1 speaking as an individual, although for disclosure
2 purposes, I am a board member of Friends of Mat-Su.

3 I am asking for an extension on the draft of
4 the Environmental Impact Survey [sic], the 90-day
5 extension. It's a long draft and I think it's only
6 fair that we are given a little more time. Thank
7 you.

8 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, sir. The next
9 speaker is Janel Walton. You will be followed by
10 Linda Gant. And Ms. Walton is speaking as an
11 individual, I understand.

12 MS. WALTON: My name is Janel Walton, spelled
13 J-A-N-E-L; Walton, W-A-L-T-O-N. I'm speaking as an
14 individual and I live on Government Hill. You guys
15 have seen me at lots of meetings. I am so sorry I
16 don't have a prepared statement, so I'm flying off
17 the cuff here.

18 The first thing I wanted to say was, the
19 article in the newspaper this morning probably
20 didn't make everybody else happy. But the belugas,
21 they apparently need to be listed as an endangered
22 species. And it says in here, in June board
23 members of the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority
24 authorized its staff to spend up to \$50,000 for
25 lawyers to fight the listing.

1 So what I want to say is, how is it possible
2 for us to expect to receive an impartial analysis
3 about the effects of the bridge on the environment
4 from an agency like KABATA who's spending \$50,000
5 in attorney's fees simply for the fact of stopping
6 the beluga whales from being listed as an
7 endangered species? I think that's a no-brainer.
8 It's too -- it's too competitive. You cannot
9 possibly do that.

10 The second thing I want to touch on is -- I'm
11 looking at this giant Draft EIS and I feel like the
12 wheel is being totally reinvented and we're acting
13 as this is the very first time that the Knik Arm
14 Bridge has been brought up. And back in 1984, it
15 went as far as national Draft Environmental Impact
16 Statement, identical, same thing, 1984. And they
17 came to a very different conclusion than you guys
18 came to in this report.

19 They had no problem going through military
20 land. In fact, that was the big analysis. They
21 suggested that's exactly where the route should
22 occur. And they also talked about the fact that
23 the route going and hitting on Carin Point,
24 although it was the shortest bridge route, it was
25 the most dangerous because it is the deepest area

1 and that it was better to go upstream and make the
2 bridge a longer bridge, go through the military
3 lands instead because that was safer because that
4 was shallower water.

5 And what I want to say is, I think that a
6 mistake was made in not including all these
7 previous reports, 1984, 1983, 1972, and I believe
8 1956. None of these reports were put into the
9 Draft EIS. They weren't considered, the studies
10 weren't considered and I think that a very serious
11 mistake was made on that because of the fact that
12 in 1984 a very different analysis and alternative
13 was suggested extremely contrary to what was
14 suggested in this particular EIS.

15 And, you know, honest to God, I look at the
16 fact that we're going through government hell and
17 all these previous reports never suggested to go
18 through a neighborhood, plowing through park land,
19 dumping all this traffic into downtown, and now it
20 is and there's no reason for it. There's no cause.

21 And I know that the military impact and so
22 forth, but what I don't get is that why in 1984 was
23 it okay? I mean, there's multiple letters to the
24 military saying the same thing. They said --

25 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you. Thank you,

1 Ms. Walton.

2 Melinda Gant. Ms. Gant, you may have come in
3 after I made this announcement, but the light there
4 is to signify time: One minute, blinking green
5 light; half a minute, yellow; and when the red
6 light --

7 MS. GANT: I've done this before.

8 JUSTICE BURKE: -- blinks, it's warning that
9 time is up.

10 MS. GANT: Okay.

11 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Go ahead.

12 MS. GANT: Hi. I'm Melinda Gant, last name
13 spelled G-A-N-T. I'm a resident of Government Hill
14 Community Council. I also sit on the board of the
15 council and I've been a resident now for a little
16 over nine years living in the same place.

17 A couple of concerns, here: Number one, I do
18 want to formally request an extension for response
19 for the Draft EIS. The document is huge as
20 everyone can see. The printed copy, I think, is
21 about this big (indicating).

22 Another thing I'd liked to make a formal
23 request on is that several of the residents and
24 council members attended a contact sensitive design
25 meeting in December. It was about a week process

1 in which we felt quite a bit of vital information
2 had been discussed to primary subjects on
3 mitigation for the areas that -- of the roads that
4 potentially -- where the crossing is going to go
5 through in Government Hill and then also on another
6 approach.

7 We -- I've read through the document and I
8 don't see any specific areas of where this
9 discussion took place or specifics on the
10 mitigation for the homes that are going to be in
11 the construction zone, and I'd like to make a
12 formal request that all of the -- that week session
13 in December be put into the Draft EIS.

14 The third issue that I'd also like to ask is
15 that -- do we need to go through, formally, more
16 mitigation in the Government Hill area in order to
17 get something in writing or formally put into the
18 final EIS? And I guess that would probably be a
19 question for Edrie, specifically.

20 And then lastly, again, I'm pointing out that
21 the beluga whales -- it just happened to be in the
22 papers today so that's a little bit of my thought
23 process here -- is that my concern is that there's
24 been no studies done incorporated into the final
25 EIS and I do believe that that -- as a formal

1 request, I would like to see a little more study
2 done and put into the final EIS on what the impacts
3 are going to be.

4 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you. The next person who
5 has asked to speak, Mr. Dan Lowery, speaking as an
6 individual. Mr. Lowery, did you hear me announce
7 the time?

8 MR. LOWERY: I heard what you just told
9 Ms. Gant.

10 JUSTICE BURKE: Then go ahead.

11 MR. LOWERY: I have to confess, I really don't
12 have a prepared statement, just kind of wandered
13 over here. My name is Dan Lowery, I do live on
14 Government Hill on Dogwood Street, which is one
15 street over from Elm Street, which is one of the
16 proposed routes that was considered by the -- by
17 the folks who drafted this EIS.

18 I want to say that I'm here in opposition,
19 frankly, to any plan that goes through Government
20 Hill, through any street in Government Hill or
21 under Government Hill. I think any plan that
22 involves that kind of an access route is going to
23 be devastating to our neighborhood. It's not a big
24 neighborhood. Putting a major thoroughfare through
25 it is just going to destroy it. There's absolutely

1 no question in my mind that that is going to
2 happen.

3 As far as the Draft EIS is concerned, I think
4 that the body that put it together did not consider
5 very thoroughly the possibility of running it
6 through military land. I think what happened --
7 from my reading of it, again, as everybody else had
8 to say, have I read it from front to back? No way.
9 I doubt that anybody in this room has read it from
10 front to back or could have and intelligently
11 understood it and assessed the whole thing.

12 So I haven't, but I think what happened here
13 is that the military access routes were pretty much
14 offered up and then dismissed out of hand as soon
15 as anybody from the military said, well, if we do
16 run it through our land we are going to need to
17 take into account this and that and everything
18 else.

19 Clearly, these kinds of routes can run
20 through military land. It's been done in other
21 locations other than Anchorage and I think that the
22 obstacles doing that would be overcome. I don't
23 think they were adequately addressed to the EIS
24 from what I've seen of it.

25 And clearly those would be preferable to

1 essentially destroying the oldest neighborhood in
2 Anchorage by running it through Government Hill.
3 That's all I have to say.

4 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, Mr. Lowery. I have
5 no other persons identified.

6 MS. WALTON: If there's nobody else, can we
7 talk again?

8 JUSTICE BURKE: No, ma'am.

9 MS. WALTON: Can we ask questions?

10 JUSTICE BURKE: No, ma'am. You missed the
11 opening remark about that.

12 MS. WALTON: I was hoping. I was hoping.

13 JUSTICE BURKE: We will resume as soon as
14 someone is available who wishes to speak. This
15 form will be available to them consistent with the
16 rules that are set forth.

17 MR. WRIGHT: Sir, I didn't sign up to speak,
18 but may I?

19 JUSTICE BURKE: You'll have to go out there,
20 sir, and do that.

21 (Off the record.)

22 JUSTICE BURKE: Is it Mr. Wright? Sir, you can
23 step forward to the podium. Mr. Wright, you're
24 speaking as an individual as I'm told, sir. The
25 floor is yours.

1 MR. WRIGHT: I've been asking a lot of
2 questions about financing the bridge, whether --
3 who would finance it, what the interest would be,
4 and what the insurance on the completed bridge
5 would be, but my personal opinion on the bridge is
6 that the money going into this bridge could be far
7 better spent on projects that would serve the
8 immediate needs of the people of the state rather
9 than on the bridge.

10 We have a lot of road work that needs to be
11 done due to the storms in this last year or so, and
12 I believe that the money could be much better spent
13 on extending the railroad down to Canada, which
14 would give an alternative for people who don't fly
15 to enter the state other than by cruise line. It
16 would give a route for a lot of freight to be
17 brought into the area other than by ship.

18 But I also believe that in the present world
19 situation, this huge bridge would be a target for
20 any terrorists to harm the Anchorage area. I don't
21 believe the bridge is feasible at this time. At
22 some future time it might be.

23 But this bridge would require hundreds of
24 millions of dollars for new roads to be built that
25 would bypass the community of Wasilla and Palmer

1 along the Parks Highway, and I believe that that
2 would be a detriment to businesses along that
3 highway. I don't believe it is in the best
4 interest of the people of Alaska at this time.
5 Thank you.

6 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you,
7 Mr. Wright. Sir, I don't know if we have your full
8 name. As I understand it, it's Clarence "Lee"
9 Wright; is that correct?

10 MR. WRIGHT: Yes. Yes, sir, that is correct.

11 JUSTICE BURKE: All right.

12 We will remain in session, so to speak, until
13 someone, during the time set aside, signs up.
14 Otherwise, we will sit here and sit here.

15 I will remind everyone, there will be a
16 written transcript of whatever occurs so if you do
17 leave, there's a way to find out what happened
18 while you weren't here.

19 MR. WRIGHT: I would like to thank each of you,
20 personally, for the opportunity.

21 (Off the record.)

22 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. We'll go back on
23 record. For the ladies and gentlemen who were not
24 here earlier and did not hear my opening remarks,
25 my name is Edmond Burke. I am here to conduct this

1 hearing. I have no other role in this project. I
2 really know very little about it. I'm a retired
3 judge. I was asked to come here just to conduct
4 the meeting. I will take no part in the decision
5 of anything. I will not make any findings or
6 recommendations. When it's over, I will walk away
7 and I will have nothing else to do with it.

8 People here beside me have been previously
9 introduced. Their names are on the front of the
10 table there, and I have instructed them that
11 there's not to be any dialogue or questions or
12 answers or discussion. They're to sit here and
13 listen, that's their sole job today. In fact, if
14 they attempt to speak, I'd admonish them and we
15 don't want to do that.

16 The next name I have on the list, I believe,
17 is DJ Blatchford; is that correct? All right.
18 Ma'am, you are speaking as a individual, I
19 understand. If you will step up to the microphone
20 there, you have three minutes and those lights will
21 -- the green light will blink when you have one
22 minute left; the yellow light will give you 30
23 seconds to go; and the red light will end your
24 allotted three minutes.

25 MS. BLATCHFORD: Excuse me -- how long do we

1 have?

2 JUSTICE BURKE: You have a total of three
3 minutes.

4 MS. BLATCHFORD: Okay. Thank you.

5 JUSTICE BURKE: Go ahead.

6 MS. BLATCHFORD: Well, my name is DJ
7 Blatchford; D-J; Blatchford is B-L-A-T-C-H-F-O-R-D.
8 I'm from Kasilof, Alaska. I was born in Seward,
9 Alaska, but I now reside in Kasilof and that is
10 K-A-S-I-L-O-F, Alaska. I'm speaking as a
11 individual and I was born and raised here in
12 Alaska.

13 I'm Inupiat. I come from a long line of
14 whale hunters and our whale hunting goes back to
15 the time of memorial. And I would like to know --
16 and I would like people to respond back to me if
17 they can. My P.O. Box is P.O. Box 1126, Kasilof,
18 99610. At the other bridge hearing type of setup
19 that they had, they had cards for you to fill out
20 and no one ever got back to me, so I would really
21 appreciate it if I -- if somebody would write back
22 to me, and I did put my individual e-mail down.

23 What I'd like to get across is that we've
24 done a lot of studies, scientifically, with
25 belugas. However, they've always negated the whale

1 hunters and somehow they find an excuse, and they
2 get their references and ideas from biologists that
3 haven't grown up in the area and haven't grown up
4 living with these animals. And I would like to see
5 more participation from the Cook Inlet whale
6 hunters -- excuse me.

7 The tracking of them is usually quite known
8 and I've been asked many times on what I know about
9 them. As a female whale hunter, you don't have a
10 choice when you're little, you're just kind of out
11 in the boonies -- what the rest of the Lower 48
12 calls the boonies -- and you're put into the boat.
13 And when you're put into the boat, it's just a
14 known thing that you're expected to pay attention
15 and learn, and so you would have to watch both the
16 male hunters and the female hunters if there was
17 any in the boat and you have to learn. And the
18 elders watch you and see how quickly you respond to
19 things or how you don't and they always keep you in
20 a protected situation.

21 But I think that learning from the actual
22 whale hunters is something that would benefit this
23 bridge project because we are alerted to their
24 sounds, and I think that that is something that
25 needs to be brought out. They tend to move away

1 from anything with sonic booms or any kind of loud
2 noises. Yes, they're flexible and can move away,
3 but why should we do that? Why should we invade
4 their world? And why can't we learn to work with
5 them rather than against them?

6 Thank you for your time and I appreciate it.

7 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you, Ms.
8 Blatchford.

9 The next name is Mr. Joel Blatchford, I
10 believe. Mr. Blatchford, you are here representing
11 a group; is that correct?

12 MR. BLATCHFORD: Yes, sir.

13 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Go ahead. Your
14 time is different as the group representative. You
15 get five minutes.

16 MR. BLATCHFORD: All right. My name is Joel
17 Blatchford; J-O-E-L, first name; Blatchford,
18 B-L-A-T-C-H-F-O-R-D; and I'm representing Alaska
19 Native Marine Mammal Hunters Committee. We're a
20 group that's been here before Anchorage was
21 Anchorage. My family used to run the medicine up
22 from Seward all the way to -- all the villages.

23 You know, we were taught to follow the food.
24 Now, our respect for the food is very important
25 because here these belugas are like blind. Now,

1 the federal government, they've done research,
2 they've hired all their -- studies have -- all the
3 people that they hire, they come from other places
4 in the United States and Europe. We got one guy
5 from Ireland that comes here, you know, and Canada.

6 And what these people don't realize is, this
7 water here is so muddy. You put your hand in front
8 of you, you can't see it in the water. And so
9 these belugas are like blind so they're more
10 sensitive to sound. When you make a sound over
11 here, they can here it over at the Big Su and the
12 Little Su pretty good. And you'll see them,
13 they're start to disappear pretty quick. Even when
14 a plane is flying at 800 feet and they're doing the
15 aerial surveys, they will start to hide because
16 they're so sound sensitive. It's like a blind
17 person, when you become blind, everything else
18 becomes more acute.

19 And one thing I don't like is that a lot of
20 us whale hunters that have the knowledge -- I've
21 done all the research and everything that I was
22 shown here and I've sent to the Feds, to the State,
23 these oil companies. Nobody is listening, even the
24 City. I mean, I have had all the lawyers come
25 after me in Washington, all their scientists. I

1 put a thousands dollars on the table and I said,
2 okay, you're going to blame us hunters, let's put
3 some money on it and I'll show you these things
4 ain't going to rebound. I said, I don't care what
5 you're doing, you're not listening to us. You're
6 not letting us participate, nobody is. They go and
7 hire people that, okay, yeah, I know what a beluga
8 looks like, I can go out and count and do whatever,
9 but if you don't know the movements, you're not
10 going to get a fair counting. They don't know what
11 actually the total of everything, where they're
12 going, how they're going to react, and when they
13 come in. I mean, they will even be stuck up there
14 in low tide and stay out there and feed and then
15 come back down and what are you going to do? You
16 are going to have to shut down your operation all
17 day because you don't know when they're going to
18 pop by.

19 And the bad thing is, we're sitting here,
20 everybody -- they want to expand the port. That's
21 like a teacup right there. It's shaped like a
22 teacup, and that's all unstable ground right in
23 through there. If we have an earthquake, boom,
24 you're going to have to shut that bridge down,
25 check it out. I don't know how long it takes for

1 them to check out a bridge, but it's going to take
2 a long time because any kind of earthquake we have
3 here, you're going to have to check ground
4 stability, the bridge, and maybe even -- I said
5 that before -- they're going to have to shut the
6 whole thing down for a little earthquake.

7 I don't know if you have seen how Earthquake
8 Park is, it used to be a housing area. And with
9 that teacup effect in there, the tunneling effect,
10 they widen that area and then they widen further
11 from the other side for the other boat stuff that's
12 going to happen over there. It's going to be quite
13 effective when we have an earthquake and it's just
14 going to spread all the way to Government Hill.

15 I mean, Government Hill got hit in '64.
16 That's where I was at when it happened. You know,
17 I watched it and I was like, wow, this is cool, you
18 know. I wasn't scared, I just thought it was cool,
19 you know. I mean, I'm sitting there watching all
20 these folks and some are crying, it's the end of
21 world. And that's what it did seem like to a lot
22 of people, but you folks have all got to get your
23 research together and call on people that are
24 going -- that know these whales, not people from
25 somewhere else. If you look at the Feds research,

1 it's all from everywhere else.

2 My crews have given them the research data
3 that they have, the DNA, the jawbones, but when you
4 start -- even the doctor they hired to do the
5 report form, he came and they gave him a quick
6 money. He came for three days, he got \$75,000,
7 boom, he was out of there. And I said, you didn't
8 talk to everybody, you talked to five people. That
9 was it. I mean, I'll even show you where they go,
10 but you're not talking about really what's going on
11 out there. And when you don't get that full
12 information, you're not going to know. And
13 everybody in all these companies don't know.

14 The only one that really hires us right now
15 is Conoco and they know the hunters and they come
16 to me and they say, Joel, get me some hunter, and I
17 get them for them right there on the spot. And
18 when it comes time to do any work around there,
19 boom, they'll know where they've got to go and when
20 they can shut down their business because time is
21 money.

22 JUSTICE BURKE: Okay. Thank you,
23 Mr. Blatchford.

24 The next name I've been given is Vicki
25 Burnham. You're here as an individual I

1 understand?

2 MS. BURNHAM: Yes, that's correct.

3 JUSTICE BURKE: Okay. Go ahead.

4 MS. BURNHAM: I've just come today to say
5 something quite simply. I've come to ask if
6 anybody can help me to understand why we're putting
7 so much time and energy, not to mention a
8 preposterous amount of money, into a project that's
9 been proven that is not needed and/or wanted?
10 That's all I really wanted to say. Thanks for your
11 time.

12 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you. All right. Once
13 again, I have exhausted my list of names, so we
14 will stand in recess until the next person appears.

15 (Off the record.)

16 JUSTICE BURKE: We're going to take a 15-minute
17 recess. We'll reconvene in 15 minutes with or
18 without further speakers. So for the next 15
19 minutes we are in recess.

20 (Off the record.)

21 JUSTICE BURKE: We are back on record and I'd
22 like the record to reflect that Ms. Vinson, Mr.
23 Springer, and Mr. Paulson are again present.

24 I've been given another name. Mr. Thompson,
25 will you please come forward, sir? You represent

1 the Alaska Trucking Association I'm told, so in
2 that case as a group representative you have five
3 minutes.

4 THE WITNESS: Thank you, Your Honor. My name
5 is Aves Thompson, that's A-V-E-S; Thompson,
6 T-H-O-M-P-S-O-N. I'm the executive director of the
7 Alaska Trucking Association. I'm here today to
8 testify in support of this project, the Knik Arm
9 Crossing. We at the association have supported
10 this project from the very start and are looking
11 forward to the benefits that it will provide. We
12 feel that it's a reasonable transportation
13 alternative for freight that's moving from the port
14 of Anchorage north to the Interior Alaska.

15 And we believe it will be necessary to
16 support the high volumes of freight that is
17 anticipated to come into our state and be delivered
18 through the Port of Anchorage over the next ten
19 years, and we will take the opportunity to provide
20 further written comments by the deadline, but I
21 just want to take this opportunity today to express
22 our support for this project. Thank you.

23 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you,
24 Mr. Thompson.

25 I have been informed that there is another

1 person here who wishes to speak. And you're
2 speaking as an individual.

3 MS. VARENBRINK: Correct.

4 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. You can introduce
5 yourself. You have three minutes.

6 MS. VARENBRINK: My name is Ingrid Varenbrink.
7 I think that the bridge is a very bad idea with
8 rising fuel costs, oil dependency on foreign
9 countries. I think it's imperative that we
10 discourage urban sprawl. I think the money could
11 be better used to improve the already existing
12 roadways between the Mat-Su Valley/Anchorage.

13 It could also be invested in a car and
14 passenger ferry service to Port MacKenzie, commuter
15 rail service to the Mat-Su Valley, car and van pool
16 incentives, expand the bus service. I think it
17 also could be well spent encouraging the
18 development of business in the Matanuska Valley so
19 that people wouldn't have to commute, and perhaps
20 have businesses here and have satellite offices
21 there, and also to promote telecommuting.

22 If the bridge is built, I think it's going to
23 be an albatross around the City of Anchorage -- the
24 next citizens of Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley.

25 Thank you.

1 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you. We will have an
2 official five-minute recess starting now.

3 (Off the record.)

4 JUSTICE BURKE: I am informed there is a person
5 here who would like to make a statement. Is it
6 Ms. Wright?

7 MS. WRIGHT: Yes.

8 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Ms. Wright, I am
9 told you are speaking as an individual and you have
10 the next three minutes.

11 MS. WRIGHT: That's correct. I'm Alice Wright,
12 W-R-I-G-H-T; 8233 Loganberry in Anchorage. I take
13 environmental bends on a lot of things. I know
14 that right now Cook Inlet is damaged from
15 pollution. I know that the population of the
16 beluga whales has gone down already. It's not the
17 fault of the bridge, there is no bridge. The
18 bridge would be one more thing, and I would
19 admonish to proceed with more studies of the
20 environment of Cook Inlet.

21 I know it's not the job of the people who
22 want to build the bridge to take care of what's
23 already happened to the oil that spilled and the
24 garbage that's there and the depleting belugas, but
25 I would just like to go on record as saying that I

1 think that the cleaning up of Cook Inlet would be a
2 really good idea to include -- you know, before
3 proceeding. And I've been talking to some Native
4 hunters in the room -- in the social room there,
5 and there have been studies done with the patterns
6 of the belugas as people sat on the shore over a
7 period of many months to know the migrating habits
8 of the belugas.

9 At the same time I was talking with a hunter,
10 Native hunters actually hunt for belugas and eat
11 the meat so they know that they're very, very
12 sensitive to sound, not just from a few feet away
13 but from hundreds and hundreds of feet away --
14 hundreds of yards away. So it's not just while
15 they're migrating through in the immediate
16 vicinity, it's through the whole inlet.

17 I would just like the whole environment to be
18 considered before the thing is done, and I would
19 also like to see a ferry tried before the bridge is
20 built. Thank you.

21 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you.

22 MR. WRIGHT: I just wanted to thank you all
23 again for letting me speak.

24 JUSTICE BURKE: We're still on the record.

25 We're not quite wound up yet. We will be in just a

1 moment.

2 According to my computer and the Internet,
3 it's officially 3:00 p.m. here in Anchorage, local
4 time. Is there anyone else outside the door there
5 that has signed up to testify?

6 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: No, there's not.

7 JUSTICE BURKE: We, apparently, have no one who
8 has signed up to testify. Everyone has had his or
9 her say that has been requested.

10 For the record, all three of the government
11 officials that I previously identified are here and
12 have been at all times when any statement was being
13 made. I would, publicly, like to thank the people
14 for their corporation and their participation.

15 And I would also like to state, for the
16 record, that all interested persons have until
17 October 30th, 2006 to get in any written comments.
18 They must be postmarked by that date to be timely.
19 Comments are encouraged. They can be hand
20 delivered, e-mailed, faxed to Ms. Vinson, who is
21 seated beside me, to the Federal Highway
22 Administration or to Ms. Betty Fauber, Knik Arm
23 Bridge and Toll Authority. Their contact
24 information is on the back page of the Draft
25 Environmental Impact Statement Public Comment

1 Process Overview handout available today at the
2 front of the other room. There is also a project
3 web site where comments can be submitted by e-mail
4 at www.knikarmbridge.com.

5 With that, we will conclude this afternoon
6 session. The time is now two minutes past 3:00 and
7 we will stand in recess until 4:30 this afternoon.

8 (Proceedings adjourned at 3:02 p.m.)

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1 REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

2 I, Valerie Martinez, Notary Public in and for the
3 State of Alaska do hereby certify:

4 That the foregoing proceedings were taken before
5 me at the time and place herein set forth; that the
6 proceedings were reported stenographically by me and
7 later transcribed under my direction by computer
8 transcription; that the foregoing is a true record of
9 the proceedings taken at that time; and that I am not a
10 party to nor have I any interest in the outcome of the
11 action herein contained.

12 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto subscribed my
13 hand and affixed my seal this _____ day of _____,
14 2006.

15

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17

Valerie Martinez

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Notary Public for Alaska

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22 My Commission Expires: June 22, 2010

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Session Two

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Commencing at 4:30 p.m.

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1 Anchorage, Alaska, Monday, October 16, 2006

2 PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

3 JUSTICE BURKE: Good afternoon, ladies and
4 gentlemen. Those of you who were here with me earlier
5 today will bear with me because you will probably hear
6 some things here in the next moment or two that you've
7 already heard. Nevertheless, I would like to welcome
8 anyone here who is a new arrival.

9 This is a public hearing on the Knik Arm
10 Crossing draft environmental impact statement, Draft
11 Section 4(f) evaluation. The hearing is sponsored by the
12 Federal Highway Administration and the Knik Arm Bridge
13 and Toll Authority a public corporation and
14 instrumentality for the State of Alaska.

15 This hearing is taking place at the Captain
16 Cook Hotel, in the Municipality of Anchorage. Today is
17 October 16th, 2006. The time, according to my record, is
18 4:34 p.m.

19 Allow me to introduce myself. My name is
20 Edmond Burke. The title that you see down there is
21 honorary. At this point I'm a retired member of the
22 state judiciary. I served for just over 23 years in the
23 Alaska Court System. I served four of those years as
24 Superior Court judge here in the Third Judicial District,
25 the last 19 years as a member of the State Supreme Court.

1 I was a justice in one term and chief justice inside the
2 court.

3 My role here is to facilitate a neutral and
4 orderly, and hopefully an effective public hearing.
5 KABATA is giving those persons present a fair opportunity
6 to state your views, whatever those might be, pertaining
7 to this proposed bridge.

8 As a moderator, I think it important to note
9 that I have not been involved with this project in any
10 way, shape or form, nor will I be involved in it,
11 following the hearing today, and then a similar hearing
12 scheduled for Wednesday up in the Mat-Su Valley. I will
13 not take part in any of the policy decisions regarding
14 the process. I will not make any findings, nor will I be
15 called upon to draw any conclusions based on the
16 testimony presented here today, or the record that's been
17 compiled or anything related to it.

18 My sole function is to conduct this proceeding
19 today, and I will do so in a manner that's fair, cordial
20 and efficient.

21 I am neither to perform nor express any
22 opinions concerning this project, the merits of the
23 project. I know of the project. I know generally what
24 they propose, but that's about as far as it goes.

25 I'm being assisted this evening by Ms. Rosie

1 Scott. She's at the adjoining table over there. Ms.
2 Scott is a true machine shorthand reporter -- a court
3 reporter, working with Alaska Stenotype Reporters. She
4 is making a verbatim record of this proceeding. And that
5 ultimately will be turned into an official transcript of
6 this hearing.

7 As most of you know, the Knik Arm Bridge
8 Crossing Project refers to a new or proposed vehicular
9 bridge crossing of the Knik Arm that will connect the
10 Mat-Su Borough and the Municipality of Anchorage. And
11 the details that relate to that proposal in various --
12 variations on the theme are next door, or can be shown to
13 you next door in what's been called the open house.

14 The Project Draft Environmental Impact
15 Statement, Section 4(f) Evaluation or Draft EIS presents
16 an analysis of the alternatives, human and natural
17 environmental impact assessments and draft mitigations.

18 The purpose of this meeting as I previously
19 indicated, is to provide members of the public the
20 opportunity to provide their views and comments to state
21 and federal officials who have responsibilities for the
22 Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and also to fulfill
23 the requirements of the national environment for hearings
24 such as this.

25 The hearing also is to continue to fulfill

1 certain regulatory requirements from both Federal Highway
2 Administration and the Department of Transportation and
3 Public Facility regarding project development.

4 For the record, the Draft Environmental Impact
5 Statement is entitled Knik Arm Crossing Environmental
6 Impact Statement in Section 4(f) evaluation. The Federal
7 Project Number is HDP-CA-0001(277). The state project
8 number is 56047/58142.

9 I'd like to introduce the government officials
10 seated at the front table. Just to my right is Ms. Edrie
11 Vinson, the environmental project manager for the Federal
12 Highway Administration and United States Department of
13 Transportation. Next to her, Mr. Dale Paulson, deputy
14 executive director of project development of the Knik Arm
15 Bridge and Toll Authority. At the far end of the table,
16 Mr. Henry Springer, executive director of the Knik Arm
17 Bridge and Toll Authority.

18 Because the purpose of the hearing is to
19 receive your views and comments, no exchange between
20 these officials and the persons testifying will be
21 permitted. I told the people up here that their role
22 here today is to listen. And should they engage in any
23 dialog with the audience, I will be -- under the rules, I
24 will have them to stop doing so immediately. And I don't
25 expect to have to admonish anyone in that regard.

1 If there are questions that are proposed from
2 the public here, those questions will be recorded by
3 Ms. Scott over there, and questions and comments will be
4 responded to at some later time.

5 As you can see from the public hearing handout,
6 these hearings will take place over a two-day stretch.
7 Today the hearing -- we had an earlier hearing that ran
8 from noon to 3:00. And this hearing is scheduled to end
9 at 9 o'clock this evening. On Wednesday, October 18th,
10 similar hearings will be held in Wasilla at the Best
11 Western Lake Lucille Inn. The time will be the same,
12 12:00 to 3:00 and 4:30 to 9:00.

13 If in either location, at 9:00 p.m. on those
14 dates there are people who have not had an opportunity to
15 testify, I will recess briefly, and we'll make a decision
16 whether to continue on later on in the evening, or to
17 continue the matter to a later date. In no event, on
18 either day, will it be past 11:00 p.m.

19 An open house is scheduled from 11:00 a.m. this
20 morning to 9:00 p.m, both here and then on October 18th
21 in Wasilla. That is what's been going on next door if
22 you haven't been in there.

23 In that room, project team members and their
24 staff are at various tables. And they're available to
25 answer the questions about the Draft Environmental Impact

1 Statement.

2 One other thing, the remarks that we'll ask for
3 here are limited in time. And I'll say a little bit more
4 about that later. But there is also another court
5 reporter next door where persons wishing to do so can
6 make a verbal statement. And there is no particular time
7 limitation. They're free to make their whole statement,
8 whatever it might be.

9 In your packet of handouts, there's a blue
10 sheet that on one side describes an overview of the
11 public hearing, including the general ground rules. On
12 the other there's a description for specific rules. I'd
13 like to go over some of the general ground rules. And
14 for the record, I'd like to deal with them specifically.

15 The first of these is that mutual respect,
16 courtesy, and patience are the key concepts that should
17 govern this here. We want to maintain an atmosphere
18 where everyone feels comfortable and welcome, regardless
19 of his or her position on the project. We want those
20 here who desire to do so, feel free to testify and feel
21 comfortable doing so. And toward that end, I would ask
22 the persons who speak to keep their comments brief, clear
23 as possible, and to the point.

24 On the -- based on 42 years in the courtroom in
25 one role or another, I can say with complete certainty,

1 that the most persuasive argument is the one that's
2 delivered in a quiet, calm manner, and based on reason.
3 And all that stuff you see on television, the lawyers
4 jumping up and down and pounding the table is about the
5 fastest way to lose a case as there could possibly be.

6 It's important when you're listening and not
7 speaking that you're being quiet, so that the people that
8 need to hear this testimony can do so. And of utmost
9 importance is that Ms. Scott will be over here to hear
10 the speaker and be able to prepare an accurate verbatim
11 transcript. Nothing drives a court reporter up the wall
12 more than having two people talking at once because
13 she's -- it's just not possible for her to record two
14 people speaking at the same time.

15 I'm happy to see that there are no -- nobody
16 marching around or putting signs on the wall or banners.
17 And those, of course, will not be permitted. There is a
18 table in the lobby for any information prepared for
19 members of the public. This information will be
20 available. And also the speaker should refrain from
21 addressing the audience or asking for audience
22 participation. That won't be allowed.

23 I would ask you as well to, if you haven't
24 already done so, to turn off your cell phone, or
25 Blackberry, or any other such gadget. And either turn

1 them off or put them on vibrate so that you don't have
2 any interruption or distraction of that nature.

3 The comment period on the Draft Environmental
4 Impact Statement extends through October 30, 2006.
5 Testimony given at this hearing will be recorded and put
6 in an verbatim transcript as I've already indicated, but
7 written and oral comments will be given equal
8 consideration and will be part of the public record.

9 The final Environmental Impact Statement will
10 include responses to the comments received. The final
11 Environmental Impact Statement will be available for a
12 30-day review period before a record decision is prepared
13 by the Federal Highway Administration.

14 Several handouts are available to help you
15 better understand the comments during the hearing,
16 including the public hearing overview and ground rules.
17 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement public comment
18 process overview, open house overview, project
19 newsletter, and extensive information and graphics about
20 the project may be reviewed in the open house room next
21 door.

22 Copies of the public hearing overview and
23 ground rules, Draft Environmental Impact Statement,
24 public comment process overview, and open house overview
25 have been provided to the reporter. And I will direct

1 that they be made part of the official record in the
2 draft of these proceedings.

3 In addition to the four public hearing
4 sessions, public comment on the Draft Environmental
5 Impact Statement can be submitted by written form, by
6 either mail, fax, hand delivery, or e-mail to Ms. Edrie
7 Vinson, of the Federal Highway Administration, or
8 Ms. Betty Fauber of the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll
9 Authority. Ms. Vinson's and Ms. Fauber's, U.S. mail and
10 fax and e-mail information are noted in the Draft
11 Environmental Impact Statement public comment process
12 overview sheet and comment sheet.

13 You may also submit a written comment in the
14 box in the open house room next door. As you probably
15 know, having possibly passed by there, there is a sign-in
16 table just outside the entrance to this room. All
17 persons wishing to testify must sign in. And if
18 testifying on behalf of a group, identify the group they
19 represent.

20 During the two days of hearings, each
21 individual will have only one three-minute opportunity to
22 speak, either in Anchorage or Mat-Su, but not both. Each
23 group or agency will have only one five-minute
24 opportunity to present testimony, either in Mat-Su, but
25 not both.

1 Only one representative of the group or agency
2 may use the five minutes to speak for that organization.
3 And the yielding of time, of one person's time to
4 another, is not permitted.

5 Any individual, group or agency may submit more
6 detailed written comments to the hearing record when they
7 testify, or later submittal to the official comment
8 period and record, as long as the person, group or agency
9 submitting written comments are identified on the written
10 comments, and are postmarked on or before October 30,
11 2006.

12 As I've indicated, if at 9 o'clock we have
13 people that haven't been heard and hope to be heard, a
14 decision will be made as to when that will take place,
15 whether it will be later on tonight or at some later
16 date.

17 I will call people forward to testify in the
18 order in which they signed in. And when called, the
19 person should step to the podium and state and spell
20 their name, give their address and whether you're
21 representing a group or agency.

22 Your three or five minutes will not begin until
23 you have stated your name and address, after which time a
24 timer will be started. When you have one minute left
25 there is a little green light there that will start to

1 blink. When you have 30 seconds that little yellow light
2 will come on. And at the end of your time, the stoplight
3 timer will turn red. And there will also be, for those
4 of you who are color blind in one fashion or another,
5 there will be a very tasteful sound that lets you know
6 the end of the round. And that will be the end of your
7 testimony.

8 I will again note, however, that with the
9 reporter next door, if you have anymore to say, to make a
10 statement there.

11 If there are any questions about the hearing
12 procedures those should be directed to me as the hearing
13 officer. So with that, I am informed that we do have
14 some people ready to speak.

15 Mr. Carl London, if you will come forward. I
16 understand you're speaking as an individual; is that
17 right?

18 MR. LONDON: Yes, sir.

19 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. And next in line
20 will be a Mr. Steve Cleary. And, Mr. Cleary, you can
21 either replace Mr. London, or get yourself set up at the
22 other podium. It's your choice.

23 All right. Mr. London?

24 MR. LONDON: My name is Carl, C-A-R-L, London,
25 L-O-N-D-O-N. I'm a male. I'm an English American. I

1 have a few comments that I greatly appreciate the work
2 that is done by the engineering team. I think it's an
3 excellent piece of work.

4 My preference would be on the far side to use
5 the north loop, instead of the current road. And on this
6 side, I would much prefer the Erickson Street cut and
7 cover tunnel to be used. To me that's the most logical
8 thing to be used.

9 And this also is important to me. Alaska is
10 the only state that does not have state rights. And to
11 me, I think it's high time we start exerting our own way
12 of doing things on our own, instead of being told by
13 outside folks on what to do. We are actually still a
14 territory, politically speaking.

15 And I greatly encourage this project to move
16 forward in all haste. I usually go around -- it takes me
17 about an hour and a half. I usually go about twice a
18 week, of which to me, is a ridiculous situation. And
19 this would greatly enhance mobility. The growth is not
20 here in Anchorage. The growth is across the way.

21 My last comment is: Does anyone here know how
22 many belugas that I can harvest a year on my subsistence
23 permit? Thank you.

24 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Mr. Cleary?

25 MR. CLEARY: Hello. My name is Steve Cleary,

1 S-T-E-V-E, C-L-E-A-R-Y, 507 B Street, Suite 213,
2 Anchorage, 99501. And I am speaking on behalf of the
3 Alaska Public Interest Research Group, APIRG.

4 Thank you, Justice Burke, and members of the
5 panel for taking our comments today for this proposed
6 project.

7 Again, I am Steve Cleary, executive director of
8 the Alaska Public Interest Group, speaking on behalf of
9 APIRG's 2000 Alaska members. APIRG has been advocating
10 for the public interest in Alaska since 1974. I'm going
11 to address in my comments to the socio-economic impacts
12 of the bridge and frankly, to put it bluntly, the
13 proposed Knik Arm Bridge is simply too costly.

14 Alaska cannot afford to build, operate and
15 maintain this colossal project. The current cost
16 estimate, 400 to 600 million, is less than half above the
17 estimates in recent years. With the cost of gas, oil,
18 asphalt, concrete, steel, and other construction
19 materials rising more than 30 percent, the proposed Knik
20 Arm Bridge is the only commodity that appears to be
21 getting cheaper.

22 While federal money was at first seen as the
23 source for the bridge funds, we all know that that money
24 is no longer available to pay all the costs for the
25 proposed bridge. And the state is in jeopardy of footing

1 the bill for building, operating, and maintaining the
2 bridge.

3 Alaska communities cannot afford the bridge and
4 other critical infrastructure improvements. Just last
5 week, Governor Murkowski and Anchorage Mayor Mark Begich
6 signed a deal to fund \$1.2 billion in road projects.
7 There's an incredible demand for the shrinking pie of
8 road dollars.

9 In a recent letter the Mat-Su Borough listed an
10 extensive array of projects that needed funding. The
11 total for only seven of 46 major infrastructures totaled
12 \$550,000,000. These include upgrades and construction on
13 the south Wasilla Parks Highway, the Palmer Wasilla
14 Highway, Seward Meridian reconstruction and extension,
15 and the Trunk Road reconstruction to four lanes. And
16 these are roads used every day by the existing population
17 centers in the Mat-Su.

18 And really, that's one of my major points
19 today, is that this bridge proposes to extend, develop to
20 areas that aren't currently population centers. We
21 believe the focus should be on existing needs, and on
22 repairing our existing infrastructure.

23 In 2005, The American Society of Civil
24 Engineers surveyed Alaska's roads and bridges and other
25 infrastructure, and found that 30 percent of Alaska's

1 bridges are structurally deficient, or functionally
2 obsolete. 33 percent of roads are in poor condition.
3 Driving on these roads, which are in need of repair, cost
4 Alaskan motorists \$102 million a year in extra repairs
5 and operating costs. That's \$212 per motorist.

6 I wanted to highlight the Whittier Tunnel as an
7 example of the toll project in Alaska that had grand
8 dreams and hasn't come out with those same dreams in
9 reality.

10 The cost estimate of the Whittier Tunnel was
11 originally set at \$49.8 million. It came out nearly
12 double that estimate at 87.9 million. It cost the state
13 nearly \$4 million a year to maintain that project. The
14 original toll proposed was supposed to be \$3.30 and now
15 the cheapest toll is \$12.

16 All this cost and uncertainty for a proposed
17 Knik Bridge that will direct growth in an unsustainable
18 sprawling manner and do little to relieve traffic
19 congestion as it now exists. Maps produced by KABATA
20 contractors show that the proposed bridge will save time
21 only for commuters coming from west of Downtown Wasilla.
22 And this does not even factor in them paying a
23 substantial toll of traveling in both directions.

24 The Mat-Su, Anchorage, indeed all of Alaska,
25 have vital infrastructure needs that are not being met.

1 It is irresponsible to continue to dedicate money to such
2 a large project that will help -- not help, I should
3 say -- it will not help meet the existing needs that
4 Alaskans have.

5 Alaska needs to look to smarter, cheaper and
6 more effective ways to build its current and future
7 infrastructure. The proposed Knik Arm Bridge will take
8 us in the wrong direction. Thank you.

9 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you, Mr.
10 Cleary. The next person on the list is Stephanie Kesler.

11 MS. KESLER: Thank you. My name is Stephanie
12 Kesler. And I'm president of the Government Hill
13 Community Council. And I'm speaking today representing
14 the Community Council. I've held the post presidency for
15 the past three years. The past two years of which have
16 been totally consumed by the Knik Arm Crossing Project.

17 These comments are from the Government Hill
18 Community Council, and are in response to the Draft EIS,
19 and the process that generated the Draft EIS. Our
20 comments will address the following: An extension of the
21 comment period, the bridge cost estimates, alternative
22 routes, Degan and Erickson routes, Government Hill's
23 proposed solution, which we had entitled the Anchorage
24 access solution, the accelerated process, the accelerated
25 EIS process, and the team building initiative, and then

1 our experience of this process in the team building
2 initiative.

3 First of all, Government Hill would like to
4 request an extension of the comment period. This
5 project, at a minimum, will cost a third to a half of the
6 state's entire DOT budget. And the DEIS itself is 6
7 inches thick. The public should definitely get more than
8 the minimum time of 45 days to provide comments. In
9 fact, it takes 45 days just to read through the thing.

10 Next up are cost estimates. The entire Draft
11 Environmental Impact Statement is twisted around to
12 \$6 million cost ceiling. The \$600 million ceiling is
13 actually one of the criteria under the purpose and need
14 statement. KABATA confidently states that the bridge can
15 be built for 600 million. However, studies in the early
16 '80s and in 2003 estimated the cost to be between 1
17 billion and 3 billion.

18 On multiple occasions Government Hill and other
19 organizations have requested a comparative analysis
20 between the proposals. However, KABATA has not provided
21 such an analysis. Instead, Chairman Wuerch has assured
22 us that the current proposal is a different plan.

23 Well, sound fiscal policy demands accurate
24 estimates. Differences of 400 million to 2.4 billion are
25 not insubstantial. And we need more than just mere

1 verbal assurances.

2 In regards to toll revenue, KABATA is depending
3 on toll revenues to cover the operating maintenance, and
4 75 percent of the capital cost of the bridge. Those
5 total of revenues are completely dependent upon a ghost
6 community. That is, the development of the Point
7 MacKenzie area that has yet to occur. KABATA's own
8 studies show that if growth patterns remain stable, i.e.,
9 Wasilla and Palmer continue to be the areas of growth,
10 KABATA will come up hundreds of millions of dollars
11 short.

12 Because the DEIS was restricted to the truly
13 unrealistic \$600 million estimate, several superior and
14 significantly more viable alternatives were rejected out
15 of hand. And in our opinion, this is the classic case of
16 the "Emperor has no clothes." In this case, the Knik Arm
17 Crossing and its result in the DEIS have no clothes.

18 Alternative routes; several viable alternative
19 routes were identified as part of the DEIS process,
20 including the Boniface route, which connected into the
21 existing highway infrastructure.

22 However, all alternatives were dismissed except
23 for two alternatives, the Degan and Erickson
24 alternatives, both of which cut right through the heart
25 of Government Hill, and are within a block of each other.

1 Although the Degan and Erickson -- all the
2 while Degan and Erickson have been labeled alternatives,
3 they are certainly not true alternatives. They are
4 within a block of each other. Instead they are minor
5 variations on the same theme, and not in keeping in the
6 spirit of the NEPA process.

7 I'm going to discuss the Degan and Erikson
8 alternatives here. The Degan alternative takes out three
9 blocks of homes, destroys two parks, a historic building,
10 and terminates with a light at the bottom of one of the
11 steepest, iciest and most accident prone hills in
12 Downtown Anchorage.

13 The Erickson route destroys two blocks of homes
14 and businesses, takes out an additional seven historic
15 houses and wipes out two parks. So if Degan and Erickson
16 dump on to the A/C couplet it will funnel traffic, much
17 of which will be heavily loaded gravel trucks, through
18 Downtown Anchorage. And also, those heavily loaded
19 gravel trucks will be going through Government Hill
20 because each of these routes have surface access
21 included as part of their design.

22 So Government Hill is now being asked to weigh
23 in on which route we would prefer, Degan or Erickson.
24 We're being asked to select which homes will be
25 destroyed, and identify the families which will be

1 uprooted. We cannot help be struck that this is a
2 Sophie's Choice. But Government Hill is not interested
3 in a Sophie's Choice. After all, this isn't World War II
4 Germany.

5 JUSTICE BURKE: That was your five minutes,
6 Ma'am. Thank you very much.

7 MS. KESLER: Okay. I'll just give them the
8 rest.

9 JUSTICE BURKE: You can --

10 MS. KESLER: Yeah, I'll go next door.

11 JUSTICE BURKE: You can do that. The next
12 person on the list is, I believe, Elizabeth Komisar. I
13 think I'm pronouncing it right. All right. Daniel
14 Skrzyński? Three minutes.

15 MR. SKRYZNSKI: Some of my concerns are the
16 proximity to the base. Looking at a possible aircraft
17 accident with the aircraft loaded with fuel, and
18 explosive emissions possibly landing short of the runway
19 crashing into the road. That would be a disaster at rush
20 hour. Also, I'm concerned about the threat to aircraft
21 if somebody did stop and fired some type of weapon at
22 these aircraft.

23 The last concern I have is the possibility of
24 an earthquake. What would happen to the bridge if there
25 was a catastrophic earthquake during rush hour traffic?

1 Those cars would probably be going into the water, and
2 those individuals would be in great jeopardy. Thank you.

3 JUSTICE BURKE: Jerome George.

4 MR. GEORGE: Thank you, Justice Burke. My name
5 is Jerome George, 3640 Dora Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska.
6 I'm a retired professional engineer, 36 years with the
7 Department of Transportation Public Facilities.

8 I graduated from high school here in Anchorage
9 in territorial days. There was 35,000 people in
10 Anchorage the year I graduated from high school. Today
11 it's pretty close to 350,000 people live in the Anchorage
12 Bowl. It's a tenfold increase in the population of this
13 community.

14 We have built a massive infrastructure,
15 airports, state office buildings, hospital, banks,
16 businesses, and other infrastructure development in
17 Anchorage to support this population. I think this
18 bridge is absolutely essential to the future of this
19 community. If we are to take advantage of the
20 infrastructure that we have built here, we have to build
21 this bridge.

22 There's less than 2,000 acres of land within
23 the Anchorage Bowl that is classified for residential use
24 that has not been built on. Where are the people going
25 to come for the future of Anchorage? Where are they

1 going to live, if not in the Matanuska Valley? They're
2 going to have to live in high-rise buildings. They're
3 going to live in Anchorage.

4 The expense of that has to be accounted for in
5 this DEIS. We have to look not only in the costs, which
6 everybody thinks they're wringing their hands about. We
7 have to be looking at the savings of the cost of
8 transporting people to Anchorage to go to work, to be
9 available to support the airport, or API, or the
10 university, or other infrastructure that we have here.

11 Those savings to those businesses for the
12 people that are coming to town to work need to be
13 emphasized in the DEIS, not just the cost. But savings
14 alone should pay for this project. We need this project
15 for the future of Anchorage, and to pay off the
16 infrastructure that we have already made and submitted.
17 Thank you very much.

18 JUSTICE BURKE: Mr. Gara?

19 MR. GARA: Thank you, You Honor. It's been a
20 long time since I've spoken on this side of the
21 microphone from you.

22 JUSTICE BURKE: Les is a former law clerk of
23 the Alaska Supreme Court.

24 MR. GARA: My name is Representative Les Gara.
25 One of the neighborhoods I represent is the Government

1 Hill Community. I'm not here to comment on whether or
2 not this bridge is a needed project. That's for other
3 people to comment on. I'm here to comment on some of the
4 interests of my community in Government Hill, Anchorage's
5 oldest neighborhood.

6 I'm here to comment on concerns that have been
7 presented and that haven't been evaluated, concerns that
8 they've presented that haven't been fairly considered.
9 And on a process that I think has been designed to make
10 sure those concerns have been fairly considered.

11 For two years I've watched in dismay of the way
12 valid concerns of a community that doesn't want an access
13 road and an access tunnel to destroy homes in the
14 neighborhood have been ignored.

15 So let me say -- and I believe, I'm speaking
16 for the record, because at every turn this community's
17 concerns are being ignored. And I think my comments
18 aren't going to change anybody's mind. But they are
19 important to be part of the record on this.

20 The Government Hill Community, as well as
21 others which said there are many other access routes that
22 wouldn't destroy Anchorage's oldest neighborhood, they
23 should be considered. Those access routes are largely
24 through Elmendorf Air Force Base. What did we find out?
25 By the summer of 2005, KABATA and the Federal Highway

1 Administration, what have they done to consider the
2 alternative access through Elmendorf?

3 Well, according to a June 2005 "Anchorage Daily
4 News" article, at the time the Government Hill concept
5 routes were released, spokesman for the Alaska Command,
6 oversees military activity in Alaska said the agency
7 hadn't been asked to consider across base route. That's
8 how much the Government Hill Community's concerns are
9 being considered. They weren't.

10 A year and a half of this process and nobody
11 ever considered an Elmendorf access route. And when they
12 did consider, when the Elmendorf official said, please
13 show us all the ones you want us to consider, and the
14 state and federal agencies give them two to consider, not
15 all of them, not all of the routes at once, just two.

16 The statute that talks about public comment on
17 this procedure says, based on the complexity of the
18 issue, a minimum of 45-day public comment period shall be
19 allowed. The Federal Highway Administration stuck to
20 that and allowed the minimum 45-day comment period. The
21 least possible amount of time for the public to comment.
22 That's another indication the public's comments, I don't
23 believe, are taken seriously.

24 The Draft EIS is actually over 2,000 pages.
25 How much time are the people in Government Hill allowed

1 to address those 2,000 pages worth of information? Three
2 minutes. Two weeks ago myself, Representative Nancy
3 Dahlstrom, Senator John Ellis, asked the Federal Highway
4 Administration to give the community, at least those
5 representatives who have relative information to present,
6 more than three, more than five minutes to talk. Those
7 concerns have been rejected. We actually haven't
8 received a response to the letter yet.

9 We also asked that the agency consider allowing
10 the public more than just the minimum 45-day public
11 comment period. We have received no response to that
12 request.

13 The process at every single turn --

14 JUSTICE BURKE: Time.

15 MR. GARA: Your Honor, I ask for consideration.

16 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you. The next person who
17 would like to comment is Lois Epstein.

18 MS. EPSTEIN: Thank you. My name is Lois
19 Epstein. I'm with Cook Inlet Keeper. The address is 308
20 G Street, Suite 219, Anchorage, 99501.

21 I'm a licensed engineer with Cook Inlet Keeper.
22 And I live in Downtown Anchorage. Cook Inlet Keeper is a
23 nonprofit, membership based watershed protection with
24 members throughout the 47,000 square mile Cook Inlet
25 watershed and elsewhere.

1 The Draft Environmental Impact Statement, or
2 DEIS has several serious, perhaps even insurmountable
3 problems, which means that the Federal Highway
4 Administration may need to begin it's EIS efforts again
5 from scratch. I do not make such a statement lightly.
6 As I will describe, it's clear that FHWA ignored or
7 minimized key input during this pre-draft environmental
8 impact statement process from public interest
9 organizations, the Government Hill neighborhood, the
10 Municipality of Anchorage, the U.S. Army Corps of
11 Engineers and the National Marine Fisheries Service or
12 NOAA Fisheries, including NOAA Fisheries' recent actions
13 regarding the Cook Inlet beluga whale.

14 As a result of ignoring this important input,
15 the DEIS analyzed an inadequate range of alternatives
16 contrary to National Environmental Policy Act
17 requirements to consider all reasonable alternatives;
18 that is, alternatives that are practical or feasible from
19 the technical and economic standpoint and using common
20 sense.

21 Public interest organizations purposed to FHWA
22 and the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority in writing,
23 during July and August 2005 a multi-modal, "Congestion
24 Relief" alternative, including commuter and cargo rail,
25 ferries, van pool, and car pool incentives to the Glenn

1 Highway, and improved public transit within Anchorage.

2 This alternative was not analyzed in the DEIS
3 even though FHWA contractors examined it. However, their
4 work has not been made public today. And Cook Inlet
5 Keeper requests that FHWA do so.

6 From your communications with these contractors
7 we understand that the alternative would ensure regional
8 connectivity and cost only approximately one-fourth the
9 cost of the Knik Arm Bridge. Likewise, Government Hill
10 Community Council's purposed Anchorage access solution
11 alternative was not analyzed, nor was the Municipality of
12 Anchorage bridge with rail alternative analyzed.

13 In order to justify its inadequate range of
14 alternatives, FHWA ignored the complex transportation
15 land use challenges of the regions. And it appears that
16 FHWA relied on Alaska Statute 19.75 alone to justify its
17 extraordinarily narrow purpose and need statement.

18 This narrow statement effectively precludes
19 non-bridge alternatives from analysis, regardless of how
20 reasonable, technically sound, inexpensive and sensible
21 such an alternative might be. Surely such an approach
22 does not meet the intent of NEPA.

23 The DEIS also fails to address the important
24 concerns of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers raised in a
25 letter to FHWA dated April 28, 2006. In this letter the

1 Corps states that the preliminary DEIS, "Supports the
2 no-build alternative as it appears to meet the purpose
3 and need and would be the least damaging practical
4 alternative." The DEIS does not address why it instead
5 chose a bridge build alternative as its preferred
6 alternative.

7 In the same letter the Corps expresses concern
8 about the impact of the bridge on the sedimentation rate
9 at the Port of Anchorage, which is a federal project.
10 It's my understanding that Congress authorized a
11 three-dimensional model of hydrology and sedimentation
12 for Knik Arm and the port area. However, this model has
13 not been developed.

14 Cook Inlet Keeper requests that KABATA, FHWA or
15 another federal entity construct such a model to examine
16 whether the bridge will increase sedimentation at the
17 Port of Anchorage to an unacceptable level, particularly
18 given the loss of juvenile salmon habitat likely at the
19 Port, due to its proposed expansion.

20 Additionally, the DEIS does not include
21 sufficient analysis of the impact of the analyzed
22 alternatives on Cook Inlet beluga whales. A "depleted"
23 species under the Marine Mammal Protection Act that will
24 soon be listed as either threatened or endangered under
25 the Endangered Species Act.

1 FHWA chose not to perform sufficient analysis
2 since there are currently no species listed as threatened
3 or endangered.

4 While this statement technically is accurate,
5 the DEIS also notes that there is a petition that has
6 been submitted to NOAA Fisheries. And I realize I'm
7 running out of time. So I won't go into additional
8 detail. But I will request an extension of the time
9 period to a total of 90 days.

10 I've been working on evaluating this draft DEIS
11 and I just simply can't possibly imagine finishing it by
12 the time remaining.

13 Thank you for your attention to these comments.
14 I wish we had more time to go into further detail.

15 JUSTICE BURKE: You understand you can make
16 additional comments with the reporter next door? The
17 court reporter is also in the next room where you're free
18 to continue the other comments.

19 MS. EPSTEIN: And that will be part of my oral
20 statement?

21 JUSTICE BURKE: And that will be part of the
22 record as well.

23 MS. EPSTEIN: Okay. Thank you.

24 JUSTICE BURKE: The next name on the list is
25 Rich Muller.

1 MR. MULLER: My name is Rich Muller. I live on
2 Government Hill. And my only comments are I really
3 think -- it seems to me, from everything I've read and
4 from what I'm seeing, that this is just a railroad job.
5 I think we do need to increase and have the bridge put
6 in, but you haven't offered any alternative. You haven't
7 really looked at the environmental impacts. You haven't
8 listened to the people that it's going to affect. And
9 they're not saying that you shouldn't do it. They're
10 saying you need to reconsider and offer some real
11 alternatives. You have not offered alternatives. And
12 that's pretty much all I've got to say. Thank you.

13 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, Mr. Muller. Next is
14 Dave Shaftel.

15 MR. SHAFTEL: Thank you. I'm a resident of
16 Government Hill. And I would like to submit some written
17 comments when I'm through.

18 The major concern that I have, and the group of
19 residents that I've been working with has, is that we
20 don't really feel that the alternatives have been
21 adequately considered.

22 I just spent some time just now talking with
23 Kevin of HDR. And we kind of looked at some
24 alternatives. And it seemed like the Anchorage access
25 solution, which was suggested by residents of Government

1 Hill and maybe some adjustments to it, might be a
2 feasible third alternative along with the Erickson and
3 Degan routes that you already have in your draft.

4 But unfortunately, it wasn't developed and it
5 seems to have been cut off kind of in midstream by
6 federal highways. And that was unfortunate.

7 The Anchorage access solution that we would
8 have liked to have seen had some advantages. It did not
9 dissect a residential area. It provided an unimpeded
10 route on and off Elmendorf Air Force Base for traffic
11 coming from the base and going onto the base, where at
12 the present time and with the routes that we have right
13 now there are stop signs, there's pedestrian traffic,
14 there's business traffic.

15 It appears from the engineer's comments, who
16 looked at some of these alternatives, that there would be
17 plenty -- or there actually would be more room for access
18 routes going on and off this bridge route than the Degan
19 and Erickson routes that you have chosen.

20 The Anchorage access solution that we have
21 suggested would result in redevelopment of the Government
22 Hill business district, which is a dilapidated and much
23 needed, that would be a boom to the community and a plus
24 for the whole Knik Arm Project.

25 And on top of that, it appears that the

1 Anchorage access route that we had suggested really would
2 give more flexibility insurance of a Phase II that would
3 connect with Ingra and Gambell.

4 So for all of those reasons, unfortunately, we
5 never got a chance to really develop this third
6 alternative. And that seems to be a major flaw in the
7 process of the DEIS as far as its gone.

8 Hopefully that could be changed and these
9 alternatives could be explored more fully into the
10 future. If I could -- I don't know where I hand this in.
11 Next door?

12 JUSTICE BURKE: If you will give that to
13 Ms. Scott, the reporter, it will be made part of the
14 record. And I am reminded here, that anyone stepping up
15 to speak to announce their name. Dave, I don't remember
16 you giving your name.

17 MR. SHAFTEL: I'd be happy to, Dave Shaftel --
18 S-H-A-F-T-E-L.

19 JUSTICE BURKE: Did you get that, Ms. Scott?

20 COURT REPORTER: Yes.

21 JUSTICE BURKE: Mr. -- I suppose I shouldn't be
22 too presumptuous, perhaps it's Ms. Randy Virgin.

23 MR. VIRGIN: Good evening. My name is Randy
24 Virgin. I'm the director of Alaska Center for the
25 Environment. Thank you for providing this opportunity to

1 comment.

2 JUSTICE BURKE: You're speaking on behalf of
3 that group?

4 MR. VIRGIN: That's correct. Ms. Vinson, nice
5 to see you again. Mr. Paulson and Mr. Springer, with all
6 due respect, I'm going to be honest with you and let you
7 know that I don't care for this project very much.

8 I don't live on Government Hill, but I do love
9 Anchorage. Our city is young and it's got its share of
10 strip malls, and dilapidated buildings. But Anchorage
11 has a real potential, a capability to mature into a great
12 northern city to match the reputation of its
13 surroundings.

14 We have a revitalized downtown. We have a
15 booming redevelopment and remodeling activity across the
16 city. We have transportation investments like the
17 Connect Anchorage project that was described in the
18 recent Daily News article. We have world class trails
19 and recreational opportunities.

20 Anchorage can grow to be a city like Vancouver,
21 British Columbia, instead of becoming the Los Angeles of
22 the North, but only if we continue to make the right
23 choices.

24 Simply put, this bridge is not the right
25 choice. It will encourage sprawl to press the level of

1 investment and redeveloping Anchorage and drain the
2 resources from every existing community.

3 If we build this thing it will redirect
4 development away from existing communities to a new city
5 of Point MacKenzie where there are few roads, no schools,
6 and no fire departments. That can only happen at the
7 expense of Anchorage and the expense of Mat-Su.

8 I quote from a letter submitted to KABATA by
9 the Corps of Engineers on April 28, 2006. KABATA's own
10 documents, clearly indicated that the overall population
11 of the Mat-Su Borough will increase approximately the
12 same amount whether or not the bridge is constructed.
13 This document also indicated that if the bridge is not
14 constructed there will be little or no need for greater
15 traffic flow into the Port MacKenzie area. As currently
16 presented, the documents support the no build
17 alternative.

18 On August 12, 2005 the Municipality of
19 Anchorage wrote the following, "The Knik Arm Crossing is
20 not needed, but will create an opportunity for a new and
21 different development. Developing the Point MacKenzie
22 area into an urban type environment encourages sprawl,
23 slows growth in Anchorage, Eagle River, Chugiak, Palmer
24 and Wasilla, shifting development away from existing
25 infrastructure and public services."

1 And the Mat-Su Borough sees this coming as
2 well. In a letter sent to KABATA on April 2006, the
3 Borough expressed its concern for its ability to serve
4 this new city. The letter notes that KABATA's population
5 estimates for the area will require six fire stations at
6 the cost of \$6 million each, six elementary schools at
7 \$20 million each, two middle schools at 30 million and
8 two high schools at 45 million each, not to mention
9 community centers, parks, pools and landfills."

10 Now, that might be necessary if Anchorage were
11 out of land. But that same letter from the Municipality
12 notes that a 2005 inventory by the planning department,
13 which shows that Chugiak, Eagle River, contain 18,700
14 acres of available land. Suitable residentially zoned
15 vacant land alone in that area is up to 7,000 acres,
16 nearly 11 square miles.

17 It goes on to state that an additional 8,150
18 new units could be built on redeveloped or un developable
19 land in the Bowl. And the Turnagain Arm could easily
20 support over twice its population of 5,000 people. I
21 don't think I need to convince anybody that the Mat-Su
22 port area has ample buildable land as well.

23 Let's talk about community land. The bridge is
24 seen by many as providing an attractive option for those
25 between Anchorage and Mat-Su. Let's take a look again at

1 KABATA's own data. I have Figure 5 from the traffic
2 study conducted by Wilbur Smith, showing a typical of
3 what's called a popular route from Wasilla to Anchorage.
4 And I'll share this with the room. Travel time on the
5 Glenn Highway, it's 48 minutes, 43 miles. If you take
6 the bridge route, almost 60 minutes. So if I take this
7 route I'm going to spend 12 more minutes in my car, and
8 I'm going to have to pay a toll to get to work later.

9 In fact, this same document states that Houston
10 is the so-called cutoff point. You need to be north of
11 Houston in order for the bridge route to actually save
12 you any time. It doesn't take a rocket scientist to look
13 at the core area map of the Mat-Su and see where the
14 development is. It's down here. It's all south of
15 Houston. None of these people are going to be served by
16 this project.

17 There is simply no commuter benefit that
18 justifies the cost of this project. And what if the
19 bridge doesn't lead to this new city that's expected?
20 Well, the fact is, KABATA needs that new city in order to
21 justify the trip numbers that support the toll
22 projections.

23 If it doesn't happen that way and the
24 development stays in the Mat-Su core area and in
25 Anchorage, then the tolls won't pay the bonds, and the

1 state legislature will be asked to fund the bond project,
2 just like the Whittier Tunnel. Let me summarize.

3 JUSTICE BURKE: I'm sorry, but your time is
4 expired.

5 MR. VIRGIN: Okay. My point is simply that --

6 JUSTICE BURKE: Mr. Virgin, your time is
7 expired.

8 MR. VIRGIN: Thank you.

9 JUSTICE BURKE: Please take your seat. All
10 right. Ms. Gray, any more names out there?

11 MS. GRAY: Not at this time.

12 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Ladies and
13 gentlemen, we will remain in session. If anyone wants to
14 speak, you may sign up. They will hand me your name and
15 you will certainly be given time to do so. Otherwise,
16 since it was announced that we would be hearing comments
17 between 4:30 and 9:00, we will be sitting here waiting
18 for these comments. You're free to sit here or not.
19 It's your choice. I'm going to call a recess until I'm
20 informed there's a speaker.

21 (Recess was had at 5:31 p.m.)

22 JUSTICE BURKE: If you would like to put your
23 name on the list you're free to do that and maybe then
24 you can speak.

25 I've been informed there's another person here,

1 Justin Massey.

2 MR. MASSEY: Thank you very much for the
3 opportunity to comment. My comments will be brief and
4 echo some of the comments that you've heard already this
5 evening.

6 My name is Justin Massey. I'm a staff attorney
7 with Trustees for Alaska. I'm here testifying in my
8 capacity as an individual, and as a resident of
9 Anchorage, and as someone who will be affected by this
10 proposal if it is to go forward.

11 My first comment is regarding the range of
12 alternatives in the Draft EIS. We met with the Federal
13 Highway Administration in the past during this process to
14 express our view that the range of alternatives should be
15 expanded to be broader. And to inform decision makers of
16 the public and to provide a clear basis, among options
17 for the decision maker.

18 We have had discussion and we are now here with
19 the Draft EIS that we find frankly unacceptable, or that
20 I should say that I found unacceptable. And I would just
21 urge you -- and I imagine some of the organizations with
22 which I work will be submitting comments in greater
23 detail about our interpretation of the purpose and needs
24 statement, and how it relates to the range of
25 alternatives.

1 But I would urge you to put this atop your list
2 of issues, whether you want to address the planned DEIS
3 because it is critical. It is the heart of this DEIS and
4 your consideration of this project.

5 The second comment that I wish to make is
6 regarding the request for extension of the comment period
7 on the Draft EIS. I brought a copy of it to you. And
8 I'm sure you're familiar with it as is the public -- I
9 assume.

10 The NEPA regulations set the minimum comment
11 period of 45 days. It's a floor. It's not a ceiling.
12 The NEPA regulations, however, are predicated on 150 to
13 300 page EISs. And I certainly don't begrudge the
14 Federal Highway Administration or any of the
15 organizations in putting together this Environmental
16 Impact Statement here and exceeding 300 pages. But I do
17 note there's approximately 1,000 pages by my count.

18 And as a result, because the public needs to
19 have time to go through this and submit detailed
20 comments, which will help you reach the best possible
21 decision, that is as well justified as can be. I urge
22 you to honor those requests for an extension to the
23 comment period to 90 days.

24 In a project of this scope and of this
25 importance over the long term to the area, I think

1 warrants a 90-day comment period.

2 So the range of alternatives, and the extension
3 of the comment period are the two comments that I wish to
4 make. And thank you again for providing me the
5 opportunity to comment.

6 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you Mr. Massey.

7 (Recess was had at 5:47 p.m.)

8 JUSTICE BURKE: The next name I have on the
9 list is Joel Neymeyer. Mr. Neymeyer you have three
10 minutes, and it's all yours.

11 MR. NEYMEYER: Do you prefer the microphone?

12 JUSTICE BURKE: I would. We're making a
13 verbatim transcript.

14 MR. NEYMEYER: Joel Neymeyer, J-O-E-L,
15 N-E-Y-M-E-Y-E-R. I'm a Government Hill resident. I
16 already had prepared statements, but I'm throwing them
17 out. I really appreciate the work shown next door. It
18 relieves some of my concerns.

19 My primary concern to date is a Phase I
20 connection to the A/C couplet, putting an intersection on
21 the side of the hill on Loop Road. I see that the
22 Erickson Alternative may get us past that.

23 I think it's been unfortunate that in the past
24 four to six months that that information could not have
25 been transmitted to the Government Hill Community

1 Council. I think there's some fence mending that can go
2 on between the parties. I think this sort of exchange of
3 information is useful. The renderings helped a lot, but
4 there are other things that could help, that we could use
5 more information on. For example, on the Elmendorf
6 bearing which was removed from consideration, the rough
7 order cost showed about a \$67 million cost to the
8 military. But we don't know if that's itemized. So if
9 we can get that sort of information, I think a lot of
10 concerns by the Community Council that this is being
11 railroaded, we might be able to alleviate some of that.

12 So my overall concern is the safety of the
13 design, the intersection designs in Phase I and Phase II.
14 And, again, I'm pleased to see that the Erickson
15 alternative may address that concern.

16 I'll give you written comments as well if you
17 want. Well, they're no longer germane because that was
18 information that -- the second one was unavailable. The
19 DEIS document, there's 134 figures, but nowhere in there
20 can you get a true appreciation of Phase I connections
21 for the Degan or Erickson alternative. So my written
22 comments will have to change accordingly. Thank you.

23 JUSTICE BURKE: And the record should reflect
24 that the officials at the front table previously
25 identified are present as they have been for every

1 comment that we've heard today.

2 I've been given another name. Mr. French,
3 would you ensure that's you. And are you here as an
4 individual or representing a group?

5 MR. FRENCH: I'm here as an individual.

6 JUSTICE BURKE: All right, sir. Under the
7 rules you have three minutes there. And the -- when the
8 yellow light goes on there you will have 30 seconds. And
9 after the red light we'll mark the end of your time.

10 MR. FRENCH: Okay. Thank you. First to take
11 care of some formalities, my name is Bob French. I'm a
12 resident of Government Hill. I'm co-chair of the KABATA
13 Community of Government Hill Community Council, but these
14 comments are my own. Since KABATA and the Federal
15 Highways chose to not respond to my comments during the
16 scoping period of this EIS, I'm formally asking that my
17 comments from those public meetings, and my written
18 comments be introduced into the record for this EIS, and
19 that they be fully answered in writing.

20 I'm also protesting that the DEIS is incomplete
21 and is missing too much information for it to be possible
22 to evaluate. And that giving it the minimum review time
23 of 45 days instead of the maximum to go through a DEIS of
24 this magnitude is just plain wrong.

25 I would like to talk about many things that I

1 feel went wrong with the proposed Knik Arm Bridge, such
2 as how I feel that the privately discussed pay raises for
3 KABATA executives were just a desperate effort to extract
4 the maximum possible personal gain before this financial
5 house of cards collapses.

6 How the bridge won't change the commuting time
7 for 95 percent of the existing residents of the Matanuska
8 Valley, how in the world they're going to get tolls to
9 pay for 75 percent of the cost of the bridge, as well as
10 all of the operations and maintenance when there is
11 nothing but a ghost town on the far side.

12 How the new taxes won't pay for the
13 infrastructure to support the new developments on Point
14 MacKenzie, and how the money could be better spent fixing
15 the state's existing transportation problems.

16 How the Corps of Engineers is concerned that
17 the bridge will cost the Port of Anchorage to silt in.
18 And that the Port MacKenzie port and the Port of
19 Anchorage will be unusable due to ships being wiped off
20 the dock face by the increase in current.

21 Or I could talk about how the beluga whales
22 will be faced with extinction when they can't feed in the
23 upper Knik Arm due to the increase in currents, not to
24 mention the impact on their numbers during the
25 construction. But I am only allotted three minutes while

1 I could probably talk for three hours on the subject.

2 I am going to ask that my written comments be
3 introduced into the record, and that they be responded to
4 in their entirety because it looks like I am out of time.
5 So thanks a lot.

6 JUSTICE BURKE: Mr. French, if you will hand
7 your written comments to Ms. Scott, we will make them
8 part of the record. And there will be a verbatim
9 transcript of your other comments.

10 Mr. French, I should have mentioned to you,
11 sir, that there is another court reporter next door
12 prepared to take verbal comments that aren't subject to
13 the time limit that's applicable to this room if you care
14 to take advantage of that opportunity, Mr. French.

15 MR. FRENCH: Thank you.

16 JUSTICE BURKE: And that, too, will be part of
17 the official record, Mr. French.

18 MR. FRENCH: I believe I will be submitting
19 further written comments later on. Would it be
20 appropriate to ask a question?

21 JUSTICE BURKE: I'll be happy to answer if I
22 can.

23 MR. FRENCH: There have been several people
24 that have asked for an extension to the comment period
25 from 45 to days to 90 days or some longer time. Is there

1 any word whether or not that's going to happen?

2 JUSTICE BURKE: I don't know what the answer to
3 that would be. But I would anticipate that a decision
4 will be made in reference to that request sometime
5 following these hearings over the next couple of days.

6 We're going to have a new speaker. Sir, will
7 you speak up there and identify yourself.

8 MR. BREDESEN: When do you start the clock?

9 JUSTICE BURKE: When you start talking. Are
10 you here as an individual?

11 MR. BREDESEN: I am here as an individual.

12 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Then you have three
13 minutes.

14 MR. BREDESEN: I'm Bill Bredesen. And I have
15 lived in Anchorage since 1970. And I've lived most
16 exclusively downtown. And the way I look at -- and I do
17 support the crossing a lot. And I'm telling you the
18 reason why is that I think unless we want to look like
19 Vancouver, British Columbia -- and I've been there
20 recently. They had a situation where they didn't put in
21 the bridge until after the downtown area grew. And they
22 locked themselves into a situation where you had to go
23 with high-rise all over.

24 And so had they had the bridge, they would have
25 gone across. And at least when you go down, read the

1 documents on the walls down there, that's what they say.

2 But I think the other thing that we need to
3 look at is what happens when the price of energy doubles.
4 Gasoline goes to six bucks. And what is the probability
5 of that? Well, if you drive in Europe today you're
6 paying six bucks.

7 And I think that if you go with -- you want
8 low-rise, and you want to have the shortest number of
9 miles between two connecting points, you've got to go
10 with this bridge, I think.

11 Lastly, with the price of oil going higher and
12 higher, and the price of transportation, I think I'd bear
13 consideration on this bridge. And you don't have to
14 build it, but it should have infrastructure so that you
15 can put it in there. I think Ted Stevens was thinking
16 way ahead when he put the train out at the airport and
17 everybody thinks he's crazy. I don't.

18 I've been in Amsterdam and seen that
19 absolute -- that same thing. And I'll end by saying that
20 the reason Alaska is going to boom and develop is because
21 of the price of fuel. And that we used 25 million
22 barrels a day in the United States. We lose foreign
23 land, Venezuela any of those, and you've got a real
24 problem. And that problem will be solved coming to
25 Alaska.

1 And in my 35 years, I at least have a pretty
2 good feel where some of these pools are. And it's
3 considerable. So that's my testimony. I will follow it
4 up with something in writing, but you might think about
5 it from that standpoint. Thank you.

6 JUSTICE BURKE: Mr. Garner, if you would
7 identify yourself. You have our ears. As an individual
8 you have three minutes under the rules.

9 MR. GARNER: Yes, sir. My name is Ryan Garner,
10 G-A-R-N-E-R. And my address is 317 East Harbor. I've
11 never been an opponent of the bridge, but I do have
12 qualms, of course, with the course direction and how it's
13 being taken about. I think it should be a little less
14 intrusive and inconsiderate. I think it may not hold the
15 best hand for long term as for Southcentral, and what can
16 happen on the other side of the bridge I understand.

17 I guess from my view point, how that money is
18 allocated, I don't necessarily have a problem with it.
19 But I do have a problem with the routing. And I think
20 there's a lot of unused leased land in other directions
21 that could be utilized in such a manner.

22 DOD does transportation breakdowns every year
23 on much more magnitudes that happen in that area, whether
24 it's rail and so on and so forth. And I think these same
25 alternatives can be used with that land. And I

1 understand the conflict with the cage and everything
2 back there. But I just really don't want to look at a
3 bunch of cars coming underneath my house. I grew up
4 there. My mother grew up there in the Quonset hut. And
5 my family has had a lot of years up there. And I would
6 like to keep it as close to that as I possibly can. But
7 appreciate your time.

8 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you
9 Mr. Garner. I've been handed two more names. And spell
10 your last name for the court reporter. Are you here as
11 an individual, sir?

12 MR. BASSETT: I'm here as an individual.

13 JUSTICE BURKE: Under the rules you have three
14 minutes.

15 MR. BASSETT: My last name is Bassett,
16 B-A-S-S-E-T-T. I've been a resident of this state for
17 47 years. My whole feeling on this bridge is build it.
18 In fact, build both bridges. The bridge will open up the
19 Valley. There's no land left here really in Anchorage.
20 We're surrounded by water or a national park. The
21 complaints about the cost, I would like to bring to
22 everyone's attention, when they built the Golden Gate
23 Bridge, why did they build it? There was only a bunch of
24 orange groves over on the other side. In Canada they
25 built what they call the Federation Bridge to Prince

1 Edward Island to shore, it's a 17-mile long bridge. And
2 it's only a bunch of dumb fishermen and potato farmers
3 over there, but they built a bridge over some of the
4 roughest water in the world, the North Atlantic.

5 We need to build this bridge. All this
6 complaining about that we need to take the money and we
7 could use it for social programs, they produce nothing.
8 A bridge will cut down on traffic to and from the Valley.
9 It will allow the Valley to expand.

10 If anyone has got any better suggestions I want
11 to hear it. But it is not taking the money and fixing
12 the potholes in the city, which is another problem that
13 has nothing to do with expanding our road system. We
14 have not built a major new road in this state in
15 35 years. I believe that was the Parks Highway. And
16 being tied up by all these environmental groups, saying
17 we should do this, we should do that, we need to look at
18 the big picture. We need to have a road structure in
19 this state. We do not. Thank you.

20 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, Mr. Bassett. The
21 next name I have is Kelly McDonald. Kelly McDonald?
22 Okay. Next is Michael Stoianoff? Mark Butler? Are you
23 here as an individual, sir?

24 MR. BUTLER: I'm obviously not a scientist, but
25 I have a hard time imagining that putting 10 to 45,000

1 cars a day to support George Weurch -- the chairman of
2 the board said on the Dan Fegen Show on June 13th -- on
3 to C Street would -- wouldn't increase the noise in those
4 neighborhoods. I see the report on the wall next door.
5 And it shows an actual drop with the increase in traffic
6 and a drop in those neighborhoods in the actual noise.

7 But it's interesting that the noise impacts
8 shown there, and I assume that's from the report itself,
9 stopped at Third Avenue. And Third Avenue perhaps is the
10 end of the actual project. But the impact from that
11 project goes all the way down through downtown and Ninth,
12 and so forth, all the way to Midtown is my understanding
13 from the engineers -- traffic engineers that are working
14 there.

15 So I don't see any noise impact shown in that
16 way. It would seem to me that mitigation is appropriate
17 on C Street and A Street from Third at the end of the
18 ramps on to Benson, all the way down to C Street, which
19 is Midtown.

20 There are a number of us live in the lower
21 areas by Moon Park and so forth. And an increase of 10
22 to 45,000 cars on C Street as Mr. Wuerch -- since he's an
23 engineer I assume he is not making up numbers -- a very
24 accomplished engineer -- that would greatly impact the
25 noise in that area, and yet I see nothing in the studies

1 about that. So I'm asking that you have mitigation on
2 that.

3 My understanding is that on that narrow
4 three-lane road coming off the bridge, say to the south
5 on C Street, there are buildings on both sides. There
6 are new birch forests, roads here that we haven't voted
7 for, KABATA on this project or \$130,000 a year salaries.

8 And to my understanding, the only plan they
9 have is to narrow the street. And take the existing
10 space and put four lanes in and have to restripe.

11 And so with trucks coming from the port as many
12 of them do, we don't have a lot of truck roads around to
13 have that, to literally narrow. I don't see how it's
14 physically possible to take 10 to 45,000 cars a day as
15 Mr. Wuerch said and physically walk across that street
16 anymore.

17 At the federal office building, the federal
18 office building owns property on the other side of C
19 Street that they use for their parking lot and their
20 employees walk across the street every day. So with that
21 increase in traffic I don't know how they could
22 physically get across. So I hope there would be some
23 mitigation included in the cost of this project for that
24 entire land. And that the noise impacts be increased all
25 the way down to Midtown. Daryl Jordan, another \$130,000

1 a year MIT trained engineer, he worked for oil companies
2 and such before. He said that the majority of growth is
3 in Midtown now. So the majority of the traffic, instead
4 of coming downtown to do more tourist oriented things
5 would be commuting from the Valley and be going to
6 Midtown.

7 JUSTICE BURKE: Sir, before you step away
8 there, I'm not sure that the court reporter got your name
9 and the spelling of your last name.

10 MR. BUTLER: Mark Butler, B-U-T-L-E-R. Thank
11 you.

12 JUSTICE BURKE: Next we have Mr. Stoianoff.

13 MR. STOIANOFF: I apologize, I have a speech
14 impediment so it's kind of difficult to understand me.

15 Thank you very much. My name is Mike
16 Stoianoff. I live in Midtown Anchorage. I currently
17 work for the State of Alaska Department of
18 Transportation, but I am here on my own behalf.

19 I am here to recommend the building of this
20 fine piece of infrastructure because it will give us
21 access to 4,000 acres of land that can be used for
22 housing, industrial purposes, a future cargo airport over
23 there, and also access to the port facilities on the
24 other side of the Knik Arm. It also gives us a third way
25 out of town in case of war or natural disaster.

1 Now, there are people who are screaming and
2 yelling about the property that might be taken on
3 Government Hill. Well, people, I'm about to lose land
4 that I live on because they want to put through an
5 insignificant nomenclature known as the East 40th Avenue
6 from Piper Street to Lake Otis, so I understand that.

7 However, Government Hill, despite its historic
8 situation, is not the metropolis, it is not the pyramids,
9 it is not the sphinx. And they will be compensated just
10 like I will be compensated for my land.

11 The -- also there is a possibility of -- I was
12 reading in the paper today that the bridge may be part of
13 a larger type based hydroelectric operation. And so I am
14 deeply in favor of the bridges across Knik Arm, of which
15 are really no different than the Transcontinental
16 railways that were in the last century and the multiple
17 bridges across the Mississippi and the Missouri River,
18 which at the time were controversial and plagued with
19 corruption. But however they were necessary, and that is
20 why I am in favor of this bridge. Thank you.

21 JUSTICE BURKE: Do you have the spelling of
22 this gentleman's last name?

23 MR. STOIANOFF: S-T-O-I-A-N-O-F-F. Thank you.

24 JUSTICE BURKE: McDonald. Are you here as an
25 individual?

1 MR. MCDONALD: I'm here as an individual.

2 JUSTICE BURKE: All right, sir. You have three
3 minutes under the rules.

4 MR. MCDONALD: I won't be using all of them.
5 This is more of a question. Back when Hickle was
6 governor the first time this issue had arisen in those
7 days -- I've been here 45 years, so I've been around a
8 day or two on some of this stuff. And this was an issue
9 that came up. He went to Japan and they have a lot of
10 this type of bridges over there, but instead of bridges
11 they're using tunnels. And they have earthquakes there
12 just like we do. Has that thought been, to anybody's
13 knowledge, been looked at as a possibility instead of
14 having the bridge and the tide questions and concerns
15 that have been raised with the bridge? Do you know?
16 Does anybody on this panel know whether or not they even
17 considered having a tunnel instead of the bridge?

18 JUSTICE BURKE: Sir, the panel is not going to
19 answer any questions -- direct questions.

20 Okay. The next name I have is Patrick Flatley.

21 MR. FLATLEY: My name is Patrick Flatley,
22 F-L-A-T-L-E-Y. Thank you for giving us the opportunity to
23 come.

24 JUSTICE BURKE: You're here as an individual?

25 MR. FLATLEY: Yes. And I've been 31-years in

1 Alaska, 29 in Anchorage. I've been pretty much
2 frustrated from day one with regards to road building
3 and it just seems to me as though the wrong people have
4 had too much influence on seeing to it that we can get
5 around this town with rubber tires. And I'm totally in
6 support of this bridge. I'm hoping that it can move
7 forward at God speed. I'm very impressed with next door,
8 with the public display, and the opportunity to review
9 and the number of people that are knowledgeable about the
10 project and answer questions.

11 And, I mean, compared to Fairbanks this is --
12 the roads in this town are almost non existent in my
13 estimation. So I'm just saying that I think we need it,
14 need it, need it, need it. And I think it should be
15 built. And I think we can do it environmentally
16 friendly. And that's about it. Thank you again.

17 JUSTICE BURKE: All right, sir. Thank you.
18 Now, I have no further names at the moment so we'll await
19 the arrival of the next speaker.

20 MR. FARKAS: My name is Gerard Farkas. I've
21 been an Anchorage resident since 1967. And I'm here to
22 voice my support for the Knik Arm Crossing.

23 I have recently driven from Anchorage to Big
24 Lake area in several rush hours. And it's evident to me
25 that in the winter, when you leave Anchorage anywhere

1 between 4 o'clock and 6 o'clock on a weeknight, all you
2 can see is solid taillights, four lanes across, as far as
3 you can see.

4 I just got back from Seattle. The problem in
5 Seattle is the self-fulfilling prophecy of the
6 environmentalist groups, special interest groups holding
7 back the overall development for the good of the
8 community. I would hate to see that happen here. We
9 need that bridge. It's evident now. And we need it for
10 the good of the community. It's important infrastructure
11 for our future and for the people that are here and will
12 be here in the future.

13 Thank you very much. Build it. I hate the
14 money you are spending on the environmental impact
15 statements. To me they're a total waste of money. Put
16 the thing in and build it. We probably could have
17 engineered it for what we spent. I know you are required
18 to do that, but let's build it before the cost of
19 construction goes up anymore. Thank you very much.

20 JUSTICE BURKE: We're going to take a 5-minute
21 recess, so we'll go off record.

22 (Off record.)

23 JUSTICE BURKE: Ladies and gentlemen, we're
24 going to reconvene here. I've been given two more names
25 of people who would like to speak. Mr. Robert Atkinson.

1 Mr. Atkinson, if you will step up here. You're here as
2 an individual?

3 MR. ATKINSON: Yes. My name is Robert
4 Atkinson. I live over on Government Hill. And I think
5 the bridge is a good idea somewhat. I don't -- they
6 talked about the -- where are they going to spend it.
7 How is it going to go.

8 The preferred alternative, I don't really think
9 that's the preferred alternative. I understand the money
10 involved. But my understanding was, is that when they
11 did the original calculation, they didn't calculate what
12 it's going to cost to build this elevated structure after
13 the A/C couplet backs in about 10 years after they build
14 it.

15 So if they factored that into the calculation,
16 I think the preferred alternative would have been more
17 attractive. So was that done?

18 JUSTICE BURKE: The panel won't be answering
19 questions today. Your question will be part of the
20 written record.

21 MR. ATKINSON: As part of the net base study
22 was that included -- the cost of the elevated structure
23 going -- you know, instead of going down through the A
24 Street bridge there, if that evaluated structure was
25 factored in where it branches out into Ingra and Gamble?

1 I don't think it was.

2 The other part is the noise level is going to
3 be wild there. You know, I grew up in Monterey,
4 California. And they built a tunnel there. And people
5 used to drive from Salinas just to come over and drive
6 through the tunnel so they could beep their horns. You
7 know, I'm sure they're going to be taking care of some
8 noise abatement things. But it's really going to impact
9 our community over there when you start having traffic
10 back up for years on that bridge; that and the pollution
11 involved with it.

12 I'm sure it can be built. I'm sure if we can
13 go to the moon we can build a bridge across Knik Arm.
14 And we can just find the best alternative for bringing it
15 to Anchorage. And that's really all I wanted to say.
16 That's about it.

17 Oh, will there be a copies of what was said
18 here tonight that we can access?

19 JUSTICE BURKE: We're making -- the reporter is
20 preparing a verbatim transcript of this proceeding. And
21 I presume those will be available to the public at some
22 point.

23 MR. ATKINSON: Great. Will they correct my
24 grammar?

25 JUSTICE BURKE: Probably not. Forty years in a

1 courtroom with court reporters taking down every word
2 they never corrected mine.

3 MR. ATKINSON: That would have been helpful,
4 huh? Thanks for your time.

5 JUSTICE BURKE: The next name on the list is
6 Kathy Weeks. Ms. Weeks, are you here as an individual
7 tonight?

8 MS. WEEKS: As an individual tonight.

9 JUSTICE BURKE: Under the rules you have three
10 minutes. When the light turns red your three minutes are
11 up.

12 MS. WEEKS: Thank you. I'm last year's
13 president of the South Addition Community Council Zone.
14 And we have a meeting this weekend to update our members,
15 who are primarily next to downtown. We start on Ninth
16 Street and go to about Sixteenth Street. And then from
17 down at the Inlet until Cordova Street. So that, of
18 course, encompasses A and C Street.

19 And prior to being president I was
20 vice-president. And, of course, I live in the area. And
21 the predominant feeling downtown, whether I'm at Downtown
22 Community Council or South Addition, is that we all
23 support -- whether it's Fairview or south addition or
24 downtown, we all support the new freeway to freeway
25 connection.

1 It was well broadcast over the weekend with the
2 Mayor and the governor supporting what now they call
3 Connect Anchorage. And so to most of the people in the
4 downtown area who have been fighting to get this freeway
5 to freeway connection -- which will be the cut and cover
6 connection of Ingra and Gambell; and you'll be able to
7 come in the Glenn Highway and shoot down to the Seward
8 Highway without any stop signs -- the logical connection
9 for all of us is to connect the highway, of course, to
10 the bridge, if the bridge ever comes through.

11 So we have had numerous resolutions over the
12 last three years supporting, maybe a route that's a
13 little bit closer to Elmendorf and a route that connects
14 directly into the Ingra and Gambell connectors and the
15 new freeway to freeway connection and not A and C. Thank
16 you.

17 JUSTICE BURKE: The next name I've been given
18 is Phyllis Adams.

19 MS. ADAMS: My name is Phyllis Adams. I'm a
20 resident of Government Hill, resident for 30 years. And
21 I've watched a lot of changes up there in those years.
22 And my main concern is for not only the residents of
23 Government Hill, but for the children that go to
24 Government Hill School. They're serving children from
25 all over Anchorage and the physical honor system and the

1 emersion program. And I'm concerned about air quality
2 and pollution. I don't think there's much value on air
3 quality. We get exhaust from the railroad yards. We get
4 them from Elmendorf, and now we're going to get more car
5 exhaust.

6 In addition to that we're going to have a
7 little more noise pollution. We already have it from the
8 base. We're at the end of the runway. I taught school
9 there. I know what I'm talking about. On warm days we
10 open the hallway doors and we have exhaust everywhere.
11 That's very unhealthy for the children as well as the
12 residents of Government Hill.

13 If you've been at Elmendorf when they exit all
14 the cars from on three gates, we have traffic backed up
15 from C Street all the way up almost to Government Hill.
16 Now, that there's only one way out of there for the
17 residents, it's really going to be a problem when you
18 have an accident to deal with, so that's one thing I'm
19 concerned about.

20 Another thing that bothers me is I will be
21 living two blocks away from this. What are you going to
22 do about the value of my property? Thank you.

23 JUSTICE BURKE: The next name on my list is
24 Greg Bell.

25 MR. BELL: My name is Greg Bell. I'm speaking

1 as an individual. I'm in favor of the Knik Arm Crossing.

2 I think it's real important to have open land for
3 residents to get out in the country and to have that
4 available to us.

5 I was born and raised here in Anchorage. I
6 lived downtown. I watched them pave Ninth when I was a
7 kid. And, you know, we had a country side. Back then
8 we'd go out to Sand Lake or up to O'Malley and those
9 areas. We've lost all of that. Now it's all part of the
10 city. So I think it's real important for the quality of
11 life so people can enjoy the outdoors and get out of town
12 and see, you know, without having to drive 40 miles first
13 and then being out of town.

14 The second thing I think is important is to
15 have another access route out of the city of Anchorage.
16 We have one access going through Wasilla and Palmer, the
17 north access and we have a south access. This will give
18 us a west access. I think that's real important.

19 It will be a quality of life for a lot of
20 folks. And it will relieve the congestion that the
21 highways now have. And these are things that are
22 especially important that we build a bridge, not to
23 mention for the young people to have a place to go and
24 find some land of their own and build their life. Thank
25 you.

1 JUSTICE BURKE: Anyone else waiting? We'll
2 stand at ease here until someone arrives or the hour of
3 9:00. All right. We're still in session. Lana Bell.

4 MS. BELL: My name is Lana Bell. And I'm
5 speaking as an individual. I would like to say that I am
6 in support of the bridge project. I think that the
7 Anchorage Bowl is full. And I am raising my children
8 here. And I would like for them to have an opportunity
9 to create their own space. And I think that the most
10 reasonable place for Anchorage to expand is across the
11 Inlet. And I think the bridge can make that happen.

12 I think it's important for the future of
13 Anchorage to be able to grow physically, and that is the
14 reason that I'm supporting the bridge project.

15 JUSTICE BURKE: Ms. Bell, thank you. There are
16 no other members of the public present. And, Ms. Gray,
17 would you confirm that there is no one in the hall there?
18 And if the young ladies are out there, will you ask them
19 to step in just for a moment?

20 MS. GRAY: They're out tearing down next door.

21 JUSTICE BURKE: In that case, the record should
22 reflect that there is no one waiting in the wings here.
23 So it appears that this matter can be closed for the day.
24 I would like to publicly thank Ms. Gray, and convey my
25 personal thanks to these young ladies out there, and my

1 time keeper, and Ms. Scott over there for her
2 stenographic work.

3 This matter will be -- this completes our
4 October 16th public hearing on the Knik Arm Crossing
5 Project and the Draft Environmental Impact Statement and
6 Section 4(f) evaluation.

7 At this time we are off record.

8 (Proceedings concluded at 9:00 p.m.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, ROSIE S. SCOTT, CSR, hereby certify:

That I am a Certified Shorthand Reporter
for Alaska Stenotype Reporters and Notary Public for the
State of Alaska; that the foregoing proceedings were
taken by me in computerized machine shorthand and
thereafter transcribed by me; that the transcript
constitutes a full, true and correct record of said
meeting taken on the date and time indicated therein.

Further, that I am a disinterested person to
said action.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto
subscribed my hand and affixed my official seal this
_____ day of _____, 2006.

ROSIE S. SCOTT
Certified Shorthand Reporter
My Commission Expires
8/16/08

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KNIK ARM CROSSING DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

AND

DRAFT SECTION 4(F) EVALUATION PUBLIC HEARING TESTIMONY

Wednesday, October 18, 2006

Best Western, Lake Lucille Inn

Wasilla, Alaska

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

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SESSION ONE

Commencing at 12:00 p.m.

1

2

JUSTICE BURKE: Good afternoon Ladies and

3

Gentlemen, on behalf of the sponsors, I would like

4

to welcome everyone to today's public hearing on the

5

Knik Arm Crossing Draft Environmental Impact

6

Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation. This hearing

7

is sponsored by the Federal Highway Administration

8

and the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority, a public

9

corporation and an instrumentality of the State of

10

Alaska.

11

For the record, this hearing is taking place at

12

the Best Western Lake Lucille Inn, 1300 West Lake

13

Lucille Drive in the City of Wasilla, Alaska.

14

Local time is just a moment or two after 12:00

15

noon. The date is Wednesday, October 18th, 2006.

16

Let me first introduce myself. My name is Edmond

17

Burke, and I'd like to explain my role here. I've

18

been asked to conduct this meeting. I am a former

19

member of the state judiciary. I served a total of

20

about 23 years in the Alaska court system, the last

21

19 of those years were as a member of the State

22

Supreme Court.

23

I have no role in the Knik Crossing Project

24

other than to conduct this hearing. I have taken no

25

part in any of the decisions or anything that's led

26

up to this moment, nor will I take part in anything

1 from this moment forward, except for the hearing
2 like this later this afternoon.

3 My only job is to facilitate a neutral and
4 orderly, and one would hope, an effective public
5 hearing, free from intimidation, which provides a
6 fair opportunity to those who want to speak to come
7 here and to press their views.

8 As a neutral, I have not been involved in the
9 project. I won't be involved in any policy
10 decisions. I'll not make any findings or
11 conclusions. And I have heretofore -- I have not
12 formed nor have I expressed any opinion on the
13 wisdom of this project, whether it should take place
14 or not. And I don't intend to ever do so. I have
15 no position on the matter. And, again, my only job
16 here is to conduct this hearing. And with that,
17 I will pack my bags and go back to fishing, or
18 whatever else I chose to do.

19 One thing that I'd like you to keep in mind is
20 that we are -- we are making a public record of
21 the -- of the proceeding, a verbatim record. And
22 this young lady to my left is Ms. Britney Chonka.
23 She is a court reporter, certified shorthand
24 reporter. She has a little gadget there in front of
25 her, looks like a boiled-down typewriter, upon which

1 she is recording every word that's stated here. And
2 eventually that will be turned into a written
3 transcript of everything that was said here.

4 Since she can't record two people talking at
5 once, I would like to advise everyone that if
6 someone is speaking that we owe it to, not only to
7 the speaker, but to Britney as well to make sure
8 that we don't interrupt or put her in a position
9 where she's trying to listen to two people at one
10 time. It's just an impossible job and it drives
11 court reporters up the wall. And I don't blame
12 them.

13 This brings us to the stated purpose of the
14 hearing. The purpose is to provide members of the
15 public the opportunity to present their views and to
16 comment to federal and state officials who have
17 responsibility for the Draft Environmental Impact
18 Statement and to fulfill the requirements of the
19 National Environmental Policy Act for a hearing.

20 This hearing also fullfills regulatory
21 requirements from both the Federal Highway
22 Administration and Department of Transportation and
23 Public Facilities regarding project development.

24 For the record, the Draft Environmental Impact
25 Statement is titled the Knik Arm Crossing

1 Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f)
2 Evaluation. The federal project number is
3 HDP-CA-0001(277). The state project number is
4 56047/58142.

5 Now I'd like to introduce the government
6 officials seated with me here at the front table.
7 To my immediate right, Ms. Edrie Vinson. Ms. Vinson
8 is the environmental project manager for the Federal
9 Highway Administration and the United States
10 Department of Transportation. Seated next to her is
11 Mr. Dale Paulson, who is the deputy exec -- the
12 executive director of Project Development of the
13 Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority. At the far end
14 of the table is Mr. Henry Springer. He is the
15 executive director of the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll
16 Authority.

17 Because the purpose of the hearing is to receive
18 your views and comments, no exchanges between these
19 officials and the person testifying will be
20 permitted. Their job here is to listen, not to
21 engage in a dialogue or to debate any particular
22 issue. They're here to listen. And I have advised
23 them that I expect them to do exactly that. And
24 should they attempt to engage in a dialogue, I'll be
25 called upon to shut things down and admonish them.

1 And I don't expect to have to do that, and I
2 certainly don't want to do it.

3 As you can see from the public hearing handout,
4 the hearing will take place over -- over -- not this
5 hearing, but hearing like this will take place over
6 two days. On Monday, day before yesterday, we held
7 a hearing in Anchorage that ran from noon until
8 approximately 3:00 p.m. And a second hearing that
9 began at 4:30 and ran until 9:00 p.m. Monday
10 evening.

11 Today we're here in Wasilla and we're going to
12 follow a similar schedule. This room will be open
13 and available to those who wish to comment from now
14 until 3:00 p.m. We will then break for an
15 hour-and-a-half. And at 4:30 p.m. we will go back
16 on the record. If others wish to come and to speak,
17 we will be available to allow that up until 9:00
18 p.m. this evening.

19 If we get a rush and there are more people than
20 expected and it's necessary, if there are people
21 still waiting at the hour of 9:00 p.m., we'll then
22 take a brief break and decide how much additional
23 time is needed and whether to continue on this
24 evening with that or to move -- continue the matter
25 to a second -- a later date. That's -- I think,

1 based on our Monday experience, that probably is not
2 too likely. But in any event, the hearing today
3 will, under no circumstances, will it go beyond
4 11:00 p.m. this evening.

5 An open house has been scheduled, was done and
6 held in Anchorage, and here today, likewise. And in
7 the nearby room over here, what we call the open
8 house, project team members are there staffing the
9 open house, and available to answer questions about
10 the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. There are
11 also a multitude of charts and diagrams that explain
12 the various aspects of this project. And if you
13 have any questions about it, it's very likely that
14 the answers may well be right there for examination.

15 The -- in your handout, if you've obtained one
16 of those, there's a blue sheet that on one side
17 describes and gives an overview of the public
18 hearing, including some general ground rules. And
19 on the other side describes some rather specific
20 rules. I'd like to go over the general ground rules
21 and will be reading them into the record.

22 The first of these is that mutual respect,
23 courtesy and patience are the key concepts that will
24 guide this hearing. We want to maintain an
25 atmosphere where everyone feels comfortable and

1 welcomed, regardless of his or her position on the
2 project. We want everyone to feel free to testify
3 and to feel comfortable while doing so.

4 I would ask you to keep your comments brief,
5 clear and to the point. I can tell you that based
6 on 42 years in a courtroom, in one role or another,
7 that the most persuasive argument, the most
8 persuasive advocacy is that delivered by the fellow
9 who does it who's calm and is well organized and
10 clear in what it is he's trying to say. The
11 television lawyer who pounds the table and jumps up
12 and down and yells and goes through all the
13 histrionics, there's no faster way to put a judge to
14 sleep than to have one of those guys in your
15 courtroom. And for what it's worth, that's -- that
16 kind of thing doesn't help one bit.

17 Needless to say, if someone is speaking, no
18 matter how strong your feelings are, please don't
19 interrupt that person. Everybody here has the right
20 to say what they have to say.

21 Next, I would add that if anyone has a cell
22 phone or a Blackberry or other such gadget that's
23 going to go off and play something from Beethoven or
24 the Opera Aida or Jingle Bells, please turn it off
25 or set it to vibrate so that we're not interrupted

1 by that sort of thing.

2 The comment period on the Draft Environmental
3 Impact Statement extends through October 30, 2006.
4 The testimony given at this hearing, as I've
5 previously noted, is being recorded by Britney here.
6 And it will be printed in a transcript. Written and
7 oral comments will be given equal consideration, and
8 will be part of the public record. The final
9 Environmental Impact Statement will include
10 responses to the comments received.

11 The final Environmental Impact Statement will be
12 available for a 30-day review period before a record
13 of decision is prepared by the Federal Highway
14 Administration. Several handouts are available to
15 help you better understand and comment during the
16 hearing, including this public hearing overview and
17 ground rules. The Draft Environmental Impact
18 Statement Public comment process overview, open
19 house overview, project newsletter and extensive
20 information and graphics about the project may be
21 reviewed in the open house room down the way here,
22 across the hall.

23 Copies of the public hearing overview and ground
24 rules, draft EIS public comment process overview and
25 open house overview have been provided to the

1 reporter. And I've directed that they be made part
2 of the official hearing transcript.

3 In addition to the four public hearing sessions,
4 two of them being held here today, public comments
5 on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement can be
6 submitted by -- in written form, either by mail,
7 fax, hand delivery or e-mail to Ms. Edrie Vinson,
8 seated beside me, of the Federal Highway
9 Administration or Ms. Betty Fauber, the Knik Arm
10 Bridge and Toll Authority. And Ms. Vinson and Ms.
11 Fauber's US mail, fax and e-mail numbers and other
12 information are noted in the Draft Environmental
13 Impact Statement Public Comment Process Overview
14 sheet and the comment sheet.

15 You may also submit written comments today in
16 the box in the open house room down the hall. There
17 is a sign-in table just outside the entrance to this
18 room. All persons wishing to testify must sign in.
19 And if testifying on behalf of a group, identify the
20 group they represent.

21 Each individual who is asked to speak will have
22 one three-minute period during which to make their
23 comments. That's on -- one such period, either in
24 this hearing or in the hearing this evening, but not
25 both. We don't need a repeat performance on the two

1 separate occasions.

2 Each group or agency will have only one
3 five-minute opportunity to present testimony, either
4 in this hearing or the one later this evening. And
5 only one representative of a group or agency may use
6 the five minutes to speak for that organization.
7 Yielding of time, one person's time to another will
8 not be allowed. Any individual, group or agency may
9 submit more detailed written comment to the hearing
10 record when they testify or later as a submittal to
11 the official comment period record, as long as the
12 person, group or agency submitting written comments
13 are identified on the written comments, and those
14 comments are post marked on or before October 30,
15 2006.

16 I think I've already said that if persons
17 present are present at 9:00 p.m., that haven't had
18 the chance to speak, we'll do what we need to do to
19 see that their comments are heard.

20 I'm going to call -- invite people to come to
21 speak and in the order in which they signed in.
22 When a person's name is called, they should step up
23 to the podium here and clearly state and spell their
24 name and whether they represent -- and state
25 whether they represent a group or agency.

1 Your three or five minutes won't begin until
2 you've stated your name, after which time the stop
3 light timer will be started. You then have -- or
4 when you have one minute left, there's a little
5 green light there that will start blinking. It will
6 alert you to the fact that you've used up two or, in
7 the case of a group, four of your minutes. There
8 was then a yellow light that will alert you to the
9 fact -- it will go on, and that will signify that
10 you have 30 seconds left. When the red light goes
11 on, your time has expired, and at that point I will
12 ask you to -- inform you that your remarks must come
13 to an end.

14 Since we've already told people they have 3
15 minutes and no more, and on a couple of occasions I
16 had to -- to cut them off, for lack of a better
17 word, I feel obligated to do the same with anyone
18 here who goes beyond that three-minute mark. We'll
19 treat everybody the same, layman or legislature or
20 the like, so --

21 Also, to remind you that if the red -- for those
22 of you who -- to whom red and green looks exactly
23 the same, like my grandson, for example, this young
24 lady over here has a little bell she'll ring and
25 it's -- she does it very tastefully. I'm sure you

1 won't be offended by it. If there are any
2 questions about the hearing procedures, those should
3 be addressed to me as the hearing officer.

4 And finally, let me just comment on my title,
5 hearing officer. I think I've already made clear
6 that while I'm here to conduct this meeting, I have
7 no other role. So that may be putting a \$1,000
8 saddle on a \$100 horse here. I'm a hearing officer
9 only in the sense that I'm conducting this meeting.
10 I have no -- no other role, no part in the decision
11 one way or the other, nor do I -- can I influence it
12 in any way.

13 So with those remarks, I will close and I will
14 invite the first person to speak.

15 The first name that's been given to me is
16 Mr. Albert Jorgensen. Mr. Jorgensen, I believe, is
17 here an individual.

18 Sir, if you'd step up to the podium and the
19 microphone here. And if you'd state your name and
20 spell your name and we'll go from there.

21 MR. JORGENSEN: My name is Albert Jorgensen
22 J-O-R-G-E-N-S-E-N. I believe in bridges. I -- I
23 served on the council of Mat-Su RCD. And the past
24 few years we have built several bridges in the area.
25 Four of them are for vehicles and three of them are

1 for ATVs. These bridges allow people to travel over
2 more country, to have a better look-see of what they
3 have and to enjoy our beautiful country we have
4 here. Thank you.

5 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, Mr. Jorgensen.

6 The second name that I've been given is -- I
7 can't tell from the R.K. Butts, I'm not sure of the
8 gender.

9 All right. Mr. Butts.

10 MR. BUTTS: That's R.K. Butts, bravo, uniform,
11 tango, tango, sierra.

12 The current plan for the bridge only contains
13 two lanes of traffic. You need four lanes of
14 traffic, including the road on the other side, on
15 Point MacKenzie. You need to plan further ahead
16 than the end of your nose. You need to look 20
17 years down the road. If you wait 30 years down the
18 road to upgrade the bridge and the road, it's going
19 to cost three times as much.

20 Current plans are to route the traffic from the
21 bridge onto South Big Lake Road and Knik-Goose Bay
22 Road. Those roads cannot handle more traffic,
23 especially 18-wheelers. I don't know if any of you
24 have driven South Big Lake Road, but it's not fun to
25 meet a big truck on that road.

1 In closing, I would request that you do not
2 build this bridge to nowhere. Put that money to use
3 somewhere else. Thank you.

4 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, Mr. Butts.

5 Next name I have is Mr. Bill Ryder.

6 MR. RYDER: Name's Bill Ryder, R-Y-D-E-R. These
7 bridges, both this one and the Ketchikan, as far as
8 I'm concerned, are idiot bridges. The cost on the
9 thing, they're estimating, could go as high as \$1.5
10 billion. Noting that most contractors that work for
11 government things, they have a two factor, which
12 means they're going to double that cost. That money
13 could be well spent many other places.

14 The other thing is that I understand that there
15 is some, either relatives or friends of some of our
16 politicians that own property out on Point McKenzie.
17 They're going to be the ones that profit from this
18 thing, which is wrong.

19 My third point on that is I don't want to be in
20 the middle of that bridge during an earthquake.
21 That thing's going to shake around there and if -- I
22 don't think they can build one that's going to be
23 safe. I just -- I don't swim that well.

24 Thank you.

25 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, Mr. Ryder.

1 Next name on my list is Mr. Dan Elliott.

2 MR. ELLIOTT: Good morning. If you're putting
3 for or against, put me down as against.

4 In the world of wishful thinking, I think this
5 is a wonderful project, just like I'd like to own
6 the vacant lot next door, but I can't afford it. In
7 the Borough, we've got -- almost all our schools
8 have got no -- no bike path, pedestrian walkway by
9 the school. We need a Palmer/Wasilla -- excuse me,
10 a Wasilla bypass, which is wishful thinking.

11 We have a hard time coming up with the money to
12 pay their teachers. If we had lots and lots of
13 money, this would be a place to -- to spend it.

14 I -- I -- I'm on the Borough of Transportation
15 Advisory Board. I realize all the benefits that
16 have been proposed for this bridge, but I think that
17 there are too many other needed roadways where the
18 people live in a poor area that need to be
19 addressed. That will be back-burnered if this
20 project goes, because I don't believe the figures
21 that they suggest for this bridge. I know that
22 things cost way more than are put down as a basic
23 infrastructure costs.

24 The paper, just a couple days ago, showed that
25 the long-range plan for Anchorage as being

1 one-and-a-half billion dollars. What I'm afraid is
2 that this thing is going to get started and we're
3 going to get stuck paying for it through not doing
4 other projects that are much more valuable. And as
5 a citizen of Wasilla, a resident, it's much faster
6 to take a four-lane highway to Anchorage, especially
7 if I wanted to get to East Anchorage or the Seward
8 Highway.

9 So although this, on paper, may look like it's
10 beneficial, I think that it's not necessary, given
11 what is necessary for the life of people in
12 Southcentral Alaska.

13 That's good enough. Thank you.

14 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you, sir.

15 That, as far as I know, that completes the list
16 of those persons who expressed their desire to
17 speak. If anyone else wishes to speak, they can
18 sign up to do so. And this microphone will be here
19 and we'll -- we'll sit here and wait and see what
20 happens. But you're free to sit here and wait too,
21 or not. That's where we are.

22 One other thing, I didn't mention it, if anyone
23 wants to speak and would rather do so in a -- a more
24 private setting and not subject to these, this
25 three-minute limit, there is a reporter in the

1 hearing -- in the open house room who will take down
2 any verbal comments. And those comments are not
3 subject to the green, yellow, red light limitation.
4 And you're certainly welcome to do that as well.
5 Okay.

6 All right. I've been given another name. Are
7 we turned up here? Yeah.

8 Mr. Guy Keruer, is that correct?

9 MR. KERUER: Yes.

10 JUSTICE BURKE: Mr. Keruer, go ahead. You have
11 three minutes, sir.

12 MR. KERUER: Thank you, my name's Guy Keruer.
13 And I want to give you a little bit of background.
14 I was born and raised here in Alaska, up in
15 Fairbanks, lived there in Fairbanks. I live in
16 Anchorage now. In fact, I was driving back from
17 Fairbanks on Monday, so I couldn't attend your open
18 house in Anchorage on Monday. So I drove out here
19 today.

20 I've also lived on the Kenai Peninsula for about
21 two years. I've spoken to the board, or to other
22 meetings regarding the bridge before. And I've
23 always said I'm not necessarily opposed to the
24 bridge. I think long-term planning for the State of
25 Alaska, a bridge would probably be a good idea.

1 However, the way the bridge is now and what you
2 guys are planning, I guess I would say I'm presently
3 opposed to it. I reviewed your EIS on line. And
4 first I'd urge you guys to extend the comment
5 period. It seems like this was a pretty short
6 period of time to digest a very large document. And
7 when I reviewed the document, there were footnotes
8 to other documents that supported your contentions.

9 And again, I didn't know where to go to find
10 them, how to review them. I did go next door to
11 some of your information people next door. And
12 example, one concern I didn't see addressed in the
13 EIS is the geological stability of Government Hill
14 by building this cut and cover tunnel.

15 I live on Government Hill. And I can tell you
16 that I ski the bluff, et cetera. And it's basically
17 a giant gravel pile. I know that during the
18 earthquake the old Government Hill grade school
19 sloughed off.

20 And again, from reviewing your EIS, I don't see
21 how you're factoring in the whole geological issue
22 for the Hill itself. I am sure the bridge and the
23 tunnel will be stable, I'm just wondering how it's
24 going to impact the neighborhood if there's a large
25 earthquake.

1 I heard the gentleman speak before me about
2 priorities. I guess I kind of agree, I'd love to
3 buy the house next door to me, but I can't afford
4 it. And as the state is facing all these issues for
5 transportation, it seems like money should be spent
6 elsewhere. I have friends in Fairbanks. Like I
7 said, I grew up there, in the Valley and on the
8 Kenai. And they all have road projects that they
9 wish this money would be spent for. And it seems
10 like you should include those things.

11 Also reviewing the EIS, I didn't see much
12 discussion of the ferry system that the Mat-Su is
13 planning to build. I keep thinking, why don't you
14 guys expand the ferry system so you can take a ferry
15 across the Kenai Peninsula as opposed to driving
16 three-and-a-half, four hours to Soldotna/Kenai, and
17 just take a short ferry system across.

18 I am worried about the impact on Government
19 Hill. I guess I am somewhat bias, since I live
20 there. I know moving here to Anchorage I looked for
21 a neighborhood that has a lot of cohesiveness and
22 closeness. And that neighborhood has that. And it
23 seems like, by what you're planning to do, you could
24 very well destroy that.

25 I'm also wondering about the impact on the City

1 of Anchorage. I've, like I said, I've been a
2 life-long Alaskan and -- does that mean I'm done?
3 Can I have one minute more?

4 JUSTICE BURKE: I'm sorry, sir. I don't have
5 any authority or discretion to extend your time.

6 MR. KERUER: All right. Thank you.

7 JUSTICE BURKE: You can submit additional
8 comments next door where there's a reporter like
9 this one, and that, too, will be part of the record.

10 MR. KERUER: All right. Thank you.

11 JUSTICE BURKE: You bet.

12 (Thereupon, a brief recess was taken, after
13 which the following proceedings were had:)

14 JUSTICE BURKE: Okay. You're on. We are
15 officially back on record. If there are any persons
16 wishing to speak, they should sign up.

17 I've been given another name of a person that
18 wishes to speak. Margaret Billinger.

19 MS. BILLINGER: We talk here? Is it on? Okay.
20 I'm a resident of Big Lake.

21 JUSTICE BURKE: Spell your last name for the
22 young lady here.

23 MS. BILLINGER: B as in boy, I-L-L-I-N-G-E-R.
24 All right. I'm a resident of Big Lake. I'm also
25 community council president, chamber of commerce

1 president and I also sell real estate in the Valley
2 here.

3 I'm really, personally, really highly in favor
4 of the bridge. I see it as a basic asset that we
5 need out here. I also see it as another safety
6 reason because we can divert all the through traffic
7 that goes through Wasilla, because you can get that
8 traffic going through up toward the Willow corridor.

9 Personally my husband, he works in Anchorage.
10 It would take him a lot -- it would be quicker. We,
11 you know, could drive through Big Lake either across
12 a toll bridge or a, you know, ferry.

13 So I guess I would say I'm highly in favor, and
14 please consider it, because the growth out in the
15 Big Lake area up toward Willow, with another mode of
16 transportation via DOT where we have an aspect of
17 being able to go another way, other than the Glenn
18 Highway, would greatly, I think, help things in our
19 community. Please consider a bridge. We really do
20 need it. Thank you.

21 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, Ms. Billinger.

22 Next name I've been given is Cheryl Metiva.

23 Have I pronounced that correctly?

24 MS. METIVA: You sure did.

25 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. If you'd spell your

1 name, please, for these nice ladies here.

2 MS. BILLINGER: Absolutely. My name is Cheryl
3 Metiva, M-E-T-I-V-A. I'm here with two hats, one as
4 a citizen of Wasilla, the other as executive
5 director of the Wasilla Chamber of Commerce.

6 I see the bridge as, not only a wonderful
7 opportunity for us to grow and expand the basis of
8 economic development, to grow the Mat-Su Borough,
9 but also to expand the entire perspective throughout
10 the state of Alaska.

11 It's an avenue for tourism. It's an avenue for
12 tremendous vehicle transportation. With 30,000
13 people commuting to Anchorage every day from the
14 Mat-Su, what a wonderful opportunity we would have
15 to lessen that traffic flow on the Parks Highway and
16 divert some of that traffic in a more positive
17 direction.

18 As you look at the traffic patterns of today,
19 you see so many accidents between Wasilla, Palmer
20 and Anchorage on a daily basis. This is an
21 opportunity to take that pressure off the Parks and
22 divert that traffic in a much more productive
23 manner. In addition to the commercial traffic that
24 it would handle, we would also have a tremendous
25 advantage for the tourism.

1 And I see the growth in the Mat-Su and in Alaska
2 tourism as only going up. It's on the incline. It
3 will become greater and greater. As I look at
4 what's happened today, 20 years from now I would
5 anticipate an additional 30 percent increase in our
6 Alaska tourism.

7 And as any of you know, when you travel and
8 become a tourist as you go to a community, when you
9 see a bridge or a ferry, that's what you gyrate
10 toward. So I see this as an opportunity in both
11 of -- in many of those areas.

12 Also the comment has been made that it's a
13 bridge to nowhere. Every road and every bridge
14 leads somewhere. And coming from a place like
15 Mackinaw Island in Michigan where we have the
16 Mackinac Bridge and a ferry system that takes us
17 back and forth, not only do I love it, I think it's
18 a tremendous avenue and quality of life issue as
19 well.

20 So I would encourage you to move forward and as
21 expeditiously as possible. Not 20 years. I'd like
22 to see it in 10. Thank you.

23 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you Ms.
24 Metiva.

25 (Whereupon, the public hearing was adjourned.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Britney E. Chonka, Court Reporter, hereby
certify:

That I am a Court Reporter for Alaska Stenotype
Reporters and Notary Public in and for the State of
Alaska at large. I certify Hereby that the forgoing
transcript is a true and correct transcript of said
proceedings taken before me at the time and place stated
in the caption therein.

I further certify that I am not of counsel to
either of the parties hereto or otherwise interested in
said cause.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand and
affix my official seal this 23rd day of October, 2006.

BRITNEY E. CHONKA, REPORTER
Notary Public - State of Alaska

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SESSION TWO

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Commencing at 4:30 p.m.

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1 JUSTICE BURKE: Good afternoon, Ladies and
2 Gentlemen. I'd like to ask, is there anyone in the
3 room who was not in the room at the beginning of the
4 earlier session starting at noon today? Did I
5 understand, sir, that you were not here this
6 morning?

7 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Right.

8 MR. BURKE: All right. Well, this is the time
9 set for the second session today of the public
10 hearing on the Knik Arm Crossing Draft Environmental
11 Impact Statement and Section 4(f) Evaluation. The
12 hearing is sponsored by the Federal Highway
13 Administration and Knik Arm Bridge and Toll
14 Authority, a public corporation and instrumentality
15 of the State of Alaska.

16 This public hearing is taking place at the Best
17 Western Lake Lucille Inn at 1300 West Lake Lucille
18 Drive in the City of Wasilla, Alaska. The current
19 time is, according to my computer here, is 4:34 p.m.
20 local time. The date is October 18th, 2006.

21 My name is Edmond Burke. I am a former member
22 of the Alaska Supreme Court. I've served in the
23 court system 23 years, the last 19 on the Supreme
24 Court. I'm presently retired.

25 My role here today is simply to facilitate this

1 hearing and conduct it, hopefully in an orderly and
2 neutral manner and provide a fair opportunity for
3 people to speak.

4 I have not been involved in the project and will
5 not be involved in any policy decision regarding the
6 project. I will not make any findings or
7 conclusions based on the testimony presented at the
8 hearing. My sole function is to conduct the hearing
9 and to see to it that people have an opportunity to
10 speak in an appropriate setting.

11 Everything we say here today is being recorded
12 by our court reporter, Britney Chonka. She's a
13 certified shorthand reporter making a verbatim
14 record of everything that goes on here, which will
15 later be turned into a -- the official transcript of
16 these proceedings.

17 As most of you know, the Knik Arm Crossing
18 project refers to a new vehicular bridge crossing of
19 the Knik Arm, connecting the Municipality of
20 Anchorage with Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

21 The Project Draft Environmental Impact Statement
22 Section 4(f) Evaluation, or draft ERI -- EIS
23 presents an analysis of the alternatives, human and
24 natural and environmental impact assessments and
25 draft mitigations.

1 The purpose of the hearing, and the only purpose
2 of this hearing, is to provide members of the public
3 the opportunity to present their views and to
4 comment to state and federal officials who have
5 responsibility for the draft EIS and to fulfill the
6 requirements with the National Environmental Policy
7 Act for the hearing.

8 This hearing also fulfills certain regulatory
9 requirements from both the Federal Highway
10 Administration and the Department of Transportation
11 and Public Facilities regarding project development.
12 For the record, the Draft Environmental Impact
13 Statement is titled the Knik Arm Crossing
14 Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4F
15 Evaluation. The federal project number is
16 HDP-CA-0001 (277). And the state project number is
17 56047/58142.

18 The government officials seated at the front
19 table are here to listen to the testimony. They are
20 Ms. Edrie Vinson to my immediate right,
21 environmental project manager for the Federal
22 Highway Administration and United States Department
23 of Transportation. Just to her right, Mr. Dale
24 Paulson. Mr. Paulson is deputy executive director
25 of project development of the Knik Arm Bridge and

1 Toll Authority. And at the far end of this table,
2 Mr. Henry Springer, executive director of the Knik
3 Arm Bridge and Toll Authority.

4 Because the purpose of the hearing is to receive
5 the views and comments of public -- members of the
6 public, no exchanges between these officials and the
7 person testifying is permitted. Those wishing to
8 testify should have the floor and all of the time to
9 themselves.

10 If there are questions, the answers to those
11 questions, both the questions and the answers will
12 be recorded and responded to at a later date.

13 This hearing will last until 9:00 p.m. this
14 evening. Except for if we need a recess here and
15 there, we will remain in session, on record,
16 prepared to receive any statement of any public
17 member who signs up and presses the desire to speak.

18 The hearing will be concluded at nine o'clock.
19 If there are people that have not had an opportunity
20 to be heard at that time, we'll recess briefly and
21 determine when those further statements will be
22 heard, whether it will be later in the evening or at
23 some future date. In no event will this hearing go
24 beyond 11:00 p.m. this evening.

25 An open house is available to you next door just

1 across the hall and project team members are there
2 available to answer questions about the Draft
3 Environmental Impact Statement.

4 The rules for this hearing are relatively
5 simple. Anyone wishing to speak must sign up at the
6 front desk. And when I'm given their name, I will
7 call those names out in the order in which they are
8 given to me. If that person is speaking as an
9 individual, he or she will have three minutes. At
10 that time, either he or she gives us their name and
11 the three minutes will be timed by our timekeeper
12 here.

13 There are three lights on the podium; the green
14 light begins to flash, it will mean one minute left.
15 The yellow light means there are 30 seconds. And
16 the red light means your time has expired.

17 In fairness to those that have gone before,
18 I will enforce those time limitations. However, in
19 the open house, there is another court reporter who
20 is available to take verbal statements that are not
21 subject to that time limitation.

22 At this time I would ask everyone present, if
23 you have a cell phone, a Blackberry or similar
24 gadget that may go off and ring during someone's
25 testimony, I would ask you to turn those off at this

1 time or set them to vibrate, rather than ring mode
2 or otherwise signal.

3 The comment period on the draft EIS extends
4 through October 30, 2006. Testimony given at this
5 hearing will be recorded and printed in a
6 transcript. Written and oral comments will be given
7 equal consideration and will be part of the public
8 record.

9 The final EIS will include responses to the
10 comments received. The final EIS will be available
11 for a 30-day review period before a record of
12 decision is prepared by the Federal Highway
13 Administration.

14 Several handouts are available to help you
15 better understand and comment during the hearing,
16 including the public hearing overview and ground
17 rules. The draft EIS public comment process
18 overview, open house overview, project newsletter
19 and extensive information and graphics about the
20 project may be reviewed in the open house room
21 across the hall.

22 Comments on the public hearing overview and
23 ground rules, Draft EIS comment process overview and
24 open house overview have been provided to the
25 reporter, and I've directed that they be made part

1 of the official hearing transcript.

2 In addition to the public hearing, public
3 comments on the draft EIS can be submitted in
4 written form by mail, fax, hand delivery or e-mail
5 to Ms. Vinson, seated here, of the Federal Highway
6 Administration, or Ms. Betty Fauber of the Knik Arm
7 Bridge Toll Authority. Their mail, fax and e-mail
8 information are noted in the draft EIS public
9 comment process overview sheet and the comment
10 sheet. You may also submit written comment tonight
11 in the box in the open house room across the hall.

12 I think I previously indicated that anyone
13 wishing to speak must first sign in at the table up
14 front there. And if testifying on behalf of a
15 group, must identify the group that they represent.

16 Any individual speaking will have only one
17 three-minute opportunity to speak. If there is
18 someone here representing a group or agency, that
19 person will be given a five-minute opportunity. But
20 only one representative of a group or agency may use
21 the five minutes. And yielding of time for one
22 person to another is not permitted in the rules.

23 Any individual, group or agency may submit more
24 detailed written comments to the hearing record when
25 they testify or later as a submittal to the official

1 comment period record, as long as the person, group
2 or agency submitting written comments are identified
3 on the comment and the comments are post marked on
4 or before October 30, 2006.

5 If there are any questions about the hearing
6 procedures, those questions should be addressed to
7 me as the hearing officer. I do want to make clear
8 that, again, that, although I'm -- I've been labeled
9 hearing officer, I'm -- my role here is simply to
10 conduct this meeting. And I will take no part in
11 any of the deliberations having to do with this
12 project. I've had no input prior to this time.
13 I will have none after this meeting. I'm here as an
14 emcee and I have no other role in these proceedings.
15 So do we have a name or two?

16 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. I've been given the
17 following names, Wayne Brost or Brast (sic), all
18 right. Sir, if you're ready you can step up to the
19 microphone there. I'm told you're speaking as an
20 individual. In that case, you have three minutes.

21 MR. BROST: Mr. Burke, I'm a dairy farmer at
22 Port MacKenzie. I don't have a lot of specific
23 comments here. I just wanted to say I appreciate
24 everybody's input and time in this project.

25 My one concern is that in this whole project,

1 whether it be the Port or the Knik Arm Toll
2 Authority, is that all the years and the money
3 that's been spent on it, I hope it's all for not.
4 I'm not up to speed on all the developments. I'm
5 going to go in there and verse myself on some of
6 these things. But we -- Mr. Burke, we encourage
7 everybody to keep moving forward on this project.

8 Obviously, you know, it's self-interest here,
9 you know. Just like yesterday, I have to drive all
10 the way around to Anchorage and it's taillights from
11 Wasilla all the way to Anchorage. And I'd like to
12 see a lot more development out in the port area just
13 for tax base. That's the only comment I have. And
14 I appreciate everybody's work that's put, you know
15 in this project. Thank you.

16 JUSTICE BURKE: All right, sir, thank you.

17 I've been given another name. Eleanor
18 Oakley.

19 Ma'am, if you would give your name and spell
20 your name for the reporter.

21 MS. OAKLEY: My name is Eleanor F. Oakley. It's
22 Eleanor, E-L-E-A-N-O-R, Oakley, O-A-K-L-E-Y. And I
23 live in Wasilla.

24 I've had 22 years in commercial real estate in
25 the state of Alaska. I was born in Alaska. And I

1 have lived here quite a few years. And when I was a
2 realtor and working out here in the Valley -- spent
3 19 years of my career here and I retired in the end
4 of '99 -- I had done quite a bit of marketing of
5 properties, mostly large blocks of land Outside, in
6 mostly Las Vegas to international investors.

7 And when we looked at the map of Alaska, or the
8 world, actually, you could see that Port MacKenzie
9 was kind of in the middle. There was a port that
10 we -- when I was on the Mat-Su Borough assembly in
11 the late '80s and early '90s, one of the reasons I
12 ran for that position as assembly person was to
13 promote the port area, but also the development of
14 the Port -- Port MacKenzie area.

15 So we could see that when we looked at the map
16 of the world that Point MacKenzie was kind of at the
17 crossroads, if you look at how the water goes. And
18 also, we need to look at expanding the area of the
19 available land for Anchorage. And the way to do
20 that is to put the bridge, because you -- if you
21 build it, they will come.

22 We've seen that in other communities, like in
23 the Washington State for some of the bridges that
24 have been built there over the years, that they were
25 inaccessible to start with, but once they got the

1 ferry system going, such as we're going to have
2 soon, and then they built a bridge, then there was a
3 lot of commerce and a lot of opportunities for
4 people to expand and to have residential and
5 investment development, business development on the
6 other side of the water.

7 And so I am very supportive of the bridge, very
8 supportive of the development of the Port MacKenzie
9 area. And I did some market studies for the CIRI
10 Corporation, which I am a member. And they do have
11 some large blocks of land out there, so we do have
12 some areas that could have commercial and
13 residential development.

14 And I think it's prime property and it's -- I've
15 flown in a helicopter over to Anchorage and brought
16 a barge back from Anchorage to that area, and it's
17 not very far. So as the gentleman just before me
18 was speaking, if we drive, we have to drive an
19 hour-and-a-half, let's say, around, or two hours to
20 Anchorage, but with the bridge we can do it in about
21 ten minutes. So I think it's -- the time has come.
22 We're ready for it. Thank you.

23 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you.

24 Next name I've been given is Donald Loesche.

25 MS. LOESCHE: I'm not Donald Loesche. I'm Dee

1 Loesche. He's indisposed at the moment. So I'll go
2 ahead and read his statement for you, if it's all
3 right with you.

4 JUSTICE BURKE: Well, we can wait for him.
5 There's -- if there's anything we're not in around
6 here, it's a hurry.

7 MS. LOESCHE: All right. Why don't you wait for
8 him and let him talk to you.

9 JUSTICE BURKE: That will be fine.

10 Mr. Loesche, I presume?

11 MR. LOESCHE: Yeah. I didn't think I'd get on
12 so quick.

13 JUSTICE BURKE: All right, sir, go ahead.

14 MR. LOESCHE: How do you do.

15 JUSTICE BURKE: Please spell your name for
16 the -- Mr. Loesche, will you spell your name for the
17 court reporter? Could you spell your name for the
18 court reporter, please?

19 MR. LOESCHE: Yes. It's Donald, Loesche,
20 L-O-E-S-C-H-E.

21 My name's Donald E. Loesche. I live at 13813
22 Halston Avenue, Big Lake, Alaska. I have been a
23 13-year resident of the territory of Alaska when we
24 become a state and have resided here for the entire
25 time in Alaska since -- since Alaska's been a state.

1 The Knik Arm Bridge is a must-do project that must
2 be done and done now.

3 For more than 20 years this project had been
4 studied, planned, held up by politics,
5 environmentalists and anti-developers. Now with the
6 gas line on the horizon, this bridge must be done
7 post haste.

8 In the literature put out by the Knik Arm
9 Bridge, the Toll Authority -- and the Toll
10 Authority, they keep referring to this as a regional
11 project, but it is not. It is a statewide project
12 with an impact all the way to the Arctic Coast. The
13 entire state will benefit from this project.

14 Projects such as developing Port MacKenzie into
15 an international trade port with worldwide commerce,
16 the development of cement manufacture, timber
17 product development, minerals, agriculture, and,
18 yes, even fishing will benefit from this. The
19 future of all Alaska hangs on this bridge and it
20 must be done and done now.

21 When the Permanent Fund was created and a
22 commission set up to administer the investments,
23 their very first announcement was that no investment
24 in Alaska was worthy of the permanent fund. So
25 where did they invest? Many millions was invested

1 in Iraq and Saddam Hussein, the San Francisco BART
2 System and, I suspect, a ton of money in the Boston
3 Big Dig. When Boston invests \$400,000 along with
4 \$400,000 from the Rockefeller Foundation in the
5 Alaska governor's race, I can only wonder why.
6 Alaska is li -- Alaska -- I can only wonder why.
7 Alaska's little and helpless against these political
8 giants. But we are very rich.

9 I think that it's time the Permanent Fund should
10 start making some investments in Alaska and the
11 first one, the Knik Arm Bridge. Alaska is really a
12 pretty nice place. It's a shame that so few people
13 get to know it. There's a lot more to it than
14 Anchorage and the Valley. And it's time we start
15 thinking about what is good for Alaska. The Knik
16 Arm Bridge is very good for Alaska and an absolute
17 necessity for all our future development. Let's
18 stop talking and start working. And let's get the
19 job done and done now. Thank you.

20 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you,
21 Mr. Loesche.

22 Let the record reflect that Mr. Loesche's
23 statement has been submitted in writing as well. It
24 will be made part of the official transcript.

25 I've been given another name, Mr. Larry Thorpe.

1 I've been told that Mr. Thorpe is not in the room,
2 nor in the room next door, so he did sign up to
3 speak as an individual. If and when he reappears,
4 we'll certainly let him speak.

5 Mr. Brad Sworts present? Mr. Sworts, you've
6 asked to speak on behalf of a group I'm told. Is
7 that right?

8 MR. SWORTS: That's right. I'm a representative
9 of the Mat-Su Borough.

10 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Sir, if you would
11 spell your name for the reporter here, then go
12 ahead.

13 MR. SWORTS: My name is spelled, B-R-A-D,
14 Sworts, S-W-O-R-T-S.

15 I'd like to thank you for the opportunity to
16 comment on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement
17 and Section 4(f) Evaluation. This project has far
18 reaching impacts and implications and potential
19 benefits to the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

20 It's important to all parties to have sufficient
21 time to effectively review this document. A 45-day
22 Environmental Impact Statement review period for a
23 project of this significance and complexity is
24 insufficient.

25 Due to the importance of this project and the

1 over 1,000 pages of text and graphics that compose
2 the document, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will
3 respectfully ask that the review period be extended
4 for an additional 45 days. This -- this additional
5 time will allow for a more thorough public and
6 agency review and determination if earlier comments
7 have been adequately addressed.

8 The Borough will be submitting additional
9 written comments. Thank you.

10 JUSTICE BURKE: All right, sir.

11 I'm told that we have another speaker,
12 Mr. Sullivan. He's speaking for himself, I believe.

13 MR. SULLIVAN: Yes, sir. Justice Burke, Members
14 of the Commission, it's Brian Sullivan,
15 S-U-L-L-I-V-A-N. And I live at 10281 Acorn Street
16 in Wasilla. I also would like to request an
17 extension of the review process.

18 In coming here tonight and looking at all the
19 information, it's a lot to digest for members of the
20 public. And it -- in looking at all the issues with
21 the wildlife and a lot of the roadway issues, I
22 think more time is needed for the public to
23 understand that.

24 There's two main things I'd like to discuss
25 tonight or comment on and that's the toll for the

1 proposed bridge. In discussing that in the context
2 of an EIS, obviously the type of bridge that is
3 funded is going to impact that. And I guess in
4 looking at the design, kind of a less expensive
5 design, it kind of looked to me like a giant
6 overpass over the water.

7 I just would like to comment that I would hope
8 that this body and the group would build a bridge
9 that Alaskans can be proud of. And looking at that
10 as it's presently proposed, I don't think we can be
11 proud of that.

12 What comes to mind, I'm from Washington State,
13 the Narrows Bridge, the old one, and they're
14 building a new one right next to it. People can
15 look at those and there's a lot of community pride
16 that comes out of that. And I would urge Alaskans
17 to want something that generates that pride.

18 In looking at the -- shifting gears, the federal
19 government, the military property there, the
20 estimates of 390 -- I'm not sure exactly of the
21 numbers -- million dollars, an estimate, looking at
22 that, just looking at how they justified that, from
23 the real cursory look at that tonight, I would say
24 that's high. And I don't know where that came from,
25 but I think those dollar estimates need to be looked

1 at more closely. And I just would urge a suspension
2 type bridge that has a lot more appeal.

3 And the other part of my comment is opposing the
4 toll, \$3 each way for a family doing that commute is
5 pretty burdensome. And a lot of those monies are
6 federal monies to build the bridge, and it seems
7 wrong to take those federal monies and then also
8 take a toll.

9 What I would suggest is maybe locate some
10 military items or assets from the Army base or the
11 Air Force base across the bridge and then we can get
12 more federal money just by using that back and
13 forth.

14 In closing, I just would say keep in mind that a
15 \$6 toll, on average families like mine living out in
16 the Mat-Su, is burdensome. And you may not have a
17 lot of people using it. So try to maximize all the
18 benefits, please. Thank you.

19 JUSTICE BURKE: You, Mr. Sullivan.

20 We're going to take a formal ten-minute recess.

21 (Thereupon, a brief recess was taken, after
22 which the following proceedings were had:)

23 JUSTICE. BURKE: All right. We're back on the
24 record. For the record, Ms. Vinson, Mr. Paulson and
25 Mr. Springer are all back at the head table.

1 Is Mr. Thorpe in the room? Mr. Thorpe, I
2 understand you have a statement to give, sir.

3 MR. THORPE: Yes, sir.

4 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Step up there and
5 spell your name for the reporter here. You have
6 three minutes, sir.

7 MR. THORPE: It won't take me that long.

8 My name is Larry Thorpe, Thorpe Drake and Marine
9 Construction, it's spelled T-H-O-R-P-E.

10 Basically I just pretty much want to say I'm in
11 favor of the bridge and Point MacKenzie. Anything
12 that has anything to do with economic development of
13 this state, I'm all for it. Because I am starting a
14 company here.

15 The only thing I really have a problem with was
16 we've all been talking about this bridge for how
17 long? Very long time. And to just literally
18 compare to the time that it has been proposed, to
19 just jump on everything all at one time and not
20 think first. Use common sense and just look at the
21 overall picture. You're involving communities,
22 involving families, you're involving basically the
23 whole Borough.

24 And it's -- I just think that things should have
25 been thought out a little bit more carefully; maybe

1 you wouldn't have this problem with the other side
2 of the river squealing, raising -- saying, because,
3 you know, just the -- basically they feel
4 threatened.

5 But as I said, I'm all for economic development
6 of the state. And any time we can make that happen,
7 we should take the initiative to get it done and not
8 just sit down and wait until it's convenient.

9 Thank you.

10 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you, Mr.
11 Thorpe.

12 I haven't been given any other names. If and
13 when I have, those people will be welcome to make
14 their statements. Anybody that wants to speak and
15 hasn't signed up, they should do that.

16 All right. On the record. All right. Sir, if
17 you'd state your name and spell it for the reporter
18 here.

19 MR. METIVA: Marty Metiva, M-E-T-I-V-A.

20 JUSTICE BURKE: Go ahead.

21 MR. METIVA: Well, first I want to thank you for
22 the forum that you provide and the time you put into
23 coming here and spending all day, you know,
24 yesterday and today, listening to us, you know. I
25 think that this is much needed and helps the

1 process. So I appreciate your time and efforts.
2 And I think you needed me right now, it was getting
3 a little long for you.

4 All I can say, I'm a city council locally. I'm
5 very involved in the community. I'm the chair of a
6 nonprofit organization, volunteer, that we just
7 created called MAT-SU Economic Enterprises, which is
8 a grass roots economic development program dealing
9 with the entrepreneurs.

10 And I believe and I'm a big proponent of the
11 Knik Arm Bridge. I think that the bridge
12 authorities have done a tremendous job, done their
13 due diligence. They've looked at anything and
14 everything. They've answered every question they
15 can. They've tried to satisfy everyone's needs from
16 Anchorage and Government Hill to the environmental
17 line to the Borough, to the Mat-Su Borough and the
18 Knik Crossing dealing with everything.

19 I -- I think they deserve a big pat on the back.
20 They've done a wonderful job. I've read over it for
21 the past three or four days looking for some reason
22 that it -- trying to come up with a reason that I
23 couldn't agree with this, and I couldn't.

24 I believe, first of all, that we need this
25 sooner than later. I think the sooner we do this,

1 the better off. This truly is going to drive
2 economic development, not only in Anchorage, but
3 here.

4 One thing, if you look at the Anchorage -- and
5 Anchorage, it's called Anchorage Bowl for a reason,
6 you can't grow anywhere. This is really going to
7 kind of help Anchorage expand from that end of it,
8 both residential area and commercial area. So the
9 bridge is going to give this leg and allow that to
10 grow from that end.

11 And as far as the Mat-Su Borough is concerned,
12 opening up that northern corridor, we're just going
13 to see all kinds of growth there, both commercial
14 and residential. And it is going to filter down and
15 assist here in the (inaudible) which is where I
16 live.

17 Some past experience, I've lived in New Orleans
18 and Michigan both. Both of those are some very
19 important bridges. New Orleans is very much like
20 Anchorage is. New Orleans couldn't grow any
21 further. It was restricted by building restrictions
22 and the French Quarter and the downtown, uptown
23 district. So they've -- until they finally put a
24 bridge to the west bank, which created -- there was
25 a bedroom community, lot of the residents, rather

1 than driving 20 miles out of the way to come into
2 town, then they put one to the north shore. So they
3 just grew themselves.

4 And then in Michigan with the Mackinac Bridge,
5 my wife testified earlier, related to foot of the
6 Mackinac Bridge. First of all, it became a
7 destination in itself. It created tourism. It
8 created business. The little sleepy town of
9 Mackinaw City, the foot of the Mackinac Bridge
10 became the number one tourist attraction. And it
11 was just shops. It had 400 year-round residents,
12 but over three million for the entire year. So
13 thank you again for your time. I appreciate it.

14 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you, sir.

15 I have been given another name here, Mr. Menard
16 is it?

17 MR. MENARD: That's correct sir.

18 Steven Menard, M-E-N-A-R-D. I just wanted to
19 keep the party going, since it was -- my friend did
20 so well. Lifetime Alaskan. First time speaker.

21 I just wanted to talk about the Knik Arm Bridge
22 and how I was born and raised in this community and
23 bridge talk has been going on for 50 years. And
24 never thought -- you know, my dad always said never
25 say never in politics. And I always said it was

1 never going to happen, it was a pipe dream. But,
2 well, you guys put together a sensible plan.

3 And where the growth will happen for the
4 Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley, I think it's a
5 no-brainer. It's all about money, I understand.
6 And as soon as we can get that money, like the
7 previous speaker said, the sooner we build it the
8 better.

9 I think most of the Valley's in agreement with
10 that. That's the future and bread winner for our
11 economic development in the Mat-Su. And we're --
12 we're putting a lot of eggs in that one basket. So
13 I just want to come up here and testify and say
14 on -- one citizen that was born here is in favor of
15 the bridge. And I thank you for your time coming
16 out.

17 MR. BURKE: All right. Thank you, sir.

18 We'll take a 15-minute recess.

19 (Thereupon, a brief recess was taken, after
20 which the following proceedings were had:)

21 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. We're back in
22 session. For the record, the government
23 representatives that were previously introduced are
24 back at their places. And I'm told we had another
25 speaker. Elizabeth Faeo.

1 Ms. Faeo, if you would step up to the mic here.
2 And perhaps you could spell your name for this young
3 lady. And the floor is yours.

4 MS. FAEO: My name is Elizabeth Faeo. I've been
5 in Alaska since 1954. I'm a homesteader and I don't
6 have to go through all my history with all you folks
7 because it's been too long for three minutes.

8 Anyway, a lot of work has gone into this thing.
9 And looking over all the materials, I'm highly
10 impressed. I totally support the bridge. I have
11 since 1959 when a whole group of people on the
12 Anchorage side walked with their buckets of rocks
13 and said: Let's build the damn thing.

14 Well, in fact, they haven't done it, they have
15 studied it. At that time they had all these
16 studies, environmental impacts and all that kind of
17 stuff way back when. And I said to Senator Kurtula
18 the fact that they've studied it and studied it and
19 studied it to death, and sure as hell, it didn't
20 die.

21 But now again, we're on the right track. I do
22 hope that we're successful in getting it built,
23 because at 72 years of age, I don't think I have
24 many years left to see it. And I sure hope I could
25 do so. Because it's not only a great advantage to

1 not only the Point MacKenzie side where I had my
2 homestead, but also to the Anchorage side. And I
3 know it will give a lot of development and
4 opportunity for a lot of people.

5 I came to Alaska from Pennsylvania. Great
6 opportunities. Couldn't look for a job, I had one,
7 two or three jobs right off the bat. And I've
8 worked for 26-and-a-half years for the government
9 and retired. My husband did with Fort Rich and he
10 retired. And unfortunately he's not able to do
11 anything now.

12 But we worked hard all our life. And I'd like
13 to see this community prosper as well as Anchorage,
14 too. I appreciate your listening to me. And good
15 luck. And let's build the damn thing.

16 JUSTICE BURKE: I've been given another name of
17 another speaker, Mr. Marquardt. I may have botched
18 that name. Is the pronunciation -- perhaps you can
19 pronounce it and tell this young lady how to spell
20 your name.

21 MR. MARQUARDT: It's pronounced Marquardt, and
22 it's spelled M-A-R-Q-U-A-R-D-T.

23 JUSTICE BURKE: First name Jay.

24 MR. MARQUARDT: First name is Jay.

25 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Thank you.

1 MR. MARQUARDT: I'm trying to see who I'm
2 actually talking to here. I was asking the girls up
3 front if actually any of you people lived in the
4 Valley at all. And she didn't seem to have an
5 answer for that. I don't know if that's a
6 possibility or not, but we do live here in the
7 Valley.

8 We spend probably 10 or 12 hours of the day out
9 on the roads in the Valley, and at any one time have
10 five trucks delivering things in the Valley. And
11 our feeling towards the bridge is that there's much
12 more important things happening in the Valley as far
13 as roads go.

14 And particularly, they don't like to see the
15 amount of expenditure going towards one project when
16 you can't even get across town here in the Valley.
17 And that's probably our biggest concern that affects
18 us the most, is that traveling between say, Palmer
19 and Wasilla, speed limit's 55, and you'll be going
20 35, cars coming out of driveways onto the roads, out
21 of private driveways, slowing up traffic, brings
22 traffic to a halt, just trying to get into their
23 driveways. And we're driving very large trucks.
24 And just the safety issues of it, things like that
25 that -- we work 7 days a week during the summertime.

1 And it's just, there's so much more important
2 things going on to -- where the money could be spent
3 that would benefit more of a majority of people than
4 possibly making it easier for people who live in
5 Anchorage to get out to a subdivision across the Arm
6 and back again, is kind of where we're looking at
7 it, from our standpoint.

8 And I feel that there's maybe too many people
9 with self-serving interests involved that own
10 property across from Anchorage that they're, of
11 course, pushing for this. And I don't know, again,
12 if any of you people here own property out at Point
13 MacKenzie or not, but seems like, obviously, if
14 somebody does own property, they want to see it
15 happen so it can increase the value of their
16 property and make some money.

17 But again, the thing that appeals to us mostly
18 is who is it going to benefit the most, I mean for
19 the majority of people. And it seems like money
20 going towards roads construction and improving what
21 we already have, the infrastructure that we need to
22 support the growth of the Valley is -- far outweighs
23 the, I don't know, billion or so dollars that
24 they're wanting to spend on the Knik Road Crossing.

25 And as far as the road going out there, again

1 the infrastructure isn't there. And we live on Knik
2 Road. And we pull out this morning at 7:15 in the
3 morning, and we've lived there for 25 years, and we
4 had to sit ten minutes on our own street trying to
5 get out to go to work in the morning. And can't see
6 how, by increasing more and more cars on Knik Goose
7 Bay Road, how that's going to improve without
8 turning it into four lanes and everything else. And
9 I think things along that issue should be done
10 before the bridge is even put in.

11 Okay.

12 JUSTICE BURKE: Thank you, sir.

13 MR. MARQUARDT: All right. Appreciate it.

14 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. All right. I've
15 been told we have another speaker.

16 Sir, if you'd state your name and spell your
17 name for the reporter here.

18 MR. BUCARIA: My name is Garvan Bucaria,
19 G-A-R-V-A-N B-U-C-A-R-I-A. I'm a resident of
20 Wasilla and also have property in the Point
21 MacKenzie area. I would like to say that this seems
22 more like a wake than a public hearing for the Knik
23 Arm Crossing. Perhaps there is some future
24 implications.

25 First of all, I would like to make a few points

1 here. I'd like to see -- I would not like to see a
2 gravel fill or rock-armored fill of the intertidal
3 wetlands in the Knik Arm. I don't believe that is
4 the prudent way, based on the fact of the high
5 probability of future seismic activity in Anchorage,
6 Knik Arm and the Point MacKenzie area. It is really
7 high.

8 I was here in 1964 during the earthquake, well,
9 after the earthquake and have seen the effects. And
10 I'm also -- have worked in Prince William Sound and
11 know the number of people that lost their lives in
12 the Valdez area, not to mention the Native
13 communities.

14 I believe a structurally supported road,
15 railroad structure over Knik Arm tidal flats has a
16 higher potential to withstand the repeated wave
17 forces that might incur -- occur if a tsunami or an
18 earthquake event happened.

19 I would like to see minimized fill in the
20 intertidal flats so not to eliminate shore bird and
21 waterfowl feeding areas adjacent to the bridge
22 access route. I believe we should provide for a
23 broader reach of accessible areas for those animals
24 and the waterfowl that use the area.

25 This bridge should be a dual purpose, have a

1 dual purpose function, include a -- including a
2 railway deck; in fact, a railway -- a railroad
3 should take priority over the highway use.
4 Similarly, an alternative corridor should be
5 included north beyond the Big Lake -- Big Lake to
6 bypass the Parks Highway corridor beyond Houston.

7 The Point MacKenzie Community Council supports
8 classification of Borough land south of the Goose
9 Bay Game Refuge, in the area of the refuge to Alsock
10 (phonetic) Road, as a water shed. And a recreation
11 corridor would link this refuge with the Susitna
12 Flats Game Refuge. I believe you need to pursue
13 that and include that in your final document.

14 The Matanuska-Susitna Borough assembly has
15 approved a 225-acre timber harvest just north of
16 Lake Lorraine in the Port district. This coincides
17 with the northern alternative leading to the Point
18 MacKenzie Road.

19 I do -- I've got two more points, sir.

20 JUSTICE BURKE: Your time's expired, I'm sorry.

21 But you can --

22 MR. BUCARIA: I will.

23 JUSTICE BURKE: -- take those to the reporter in
24 the adjoining room there or you can submit it --

25 MR. BUCARIA: I will submit --

1 MR. BURKE: -- written remarks either here or
2 the other room, either way.

3 MR. BUCARIA: Thank you.

4 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. We'll take a ten
5 minute recess.

6 (Thereupon, a brief recess was taken, after
7 which the following proceedings were had:)

8 JUSTICE BURKE: Okay. I've been given an
9 additional name. Dana Olson. Ms. Olson, I
10 understand you're speaking on your own behalf as an
11 individual, not a representative of a group. Is
12 that correct?

13 MS. OLSON: I live in the Indian Village of
14 Knik. And I do feel that I have a community basis
15 also.

16 JUSTICE BURKE: Are you their representative?

17 MS. OLSON: I'm not recognized as a Indian in
18 the United States, but I have -- am recognized in
19 Canada.

20 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. And you're an
21 individual. And you have three minutes.

22 MS. OLSON: I just wanted to say that I live in
23 the community of Knik and that if I don't have a
24 right of prescriptive use, then neither do you. You
25 see, the State can't have the right if an individual

1 has it. And I would like to show you that -- that I
2 joined one person's symbol with my symbol.

3 JUSTICE BURKE: Can you hand that to me, please?

4 MS. OLSON: It was called Rolling Pines Farm.
5 And Rolling Pines Farms was created as a state brand
6 for animals and for agriculture, and that it was
7 recognized in the agricultural community, it was
8 recognized in Civil Rights actions.

9 And I have come under -- I should say I have
10 come under where my properties are being divided
11 solely because, if I can't have a prescriptive
12 right, you can't either.

13 The historical rights that run in this region
14 have not been adequately considered. And I did
15 provide a written testimony previous today
16 addressing the news -- the newspaper insertion that
17 I saw in the Anchorage Daily News.

18 But I am in an agricultural region called Knik.
19 And I object to the density assessments and pairing
20 my agriculture use. And I have just filed an
21 intervention in a federal lawsuit recognizing that
22 EPA recognizes that the pollination of grasses can
23 be impaired by air quality.

24 And I was denied and recognized judicially not
25 having the capacity to raise my objections on

1 agriculture and any form, whatsoever, in any land
2 use plan. So I made some recommendations in my
3 testimony here that -- that you deviate from your
4 standard because I have made quite a few objections
5 to the format of your assessment.

6 Thank you.

7 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. Do you want this
8 diagram to remain part of the record?

9 MS. OLSON: Yes, I do.

10 JUSTICE BURKE: All right. I'll hand it to the
11 reporter and ask it be included in the record.

12 May I inquire of the sign-in table whether
13 anyone else has signed in? The answer's no. Could
14 you check in the hall and make sure that there's no
15 one else here that wants to sign in before we close
16 this meeting.

17 All right. Let the record reflect that we've
18 made inquiry, both in and outside the room as to
19 whether there's anyone else wishing to testify. The
20 answer being no, I will intend to adjourn this
21 meeting. I'd like to thank everyone here for their
22 cooperation. And remind any person that they have
23 until October 30, 2006 to get in any written
24 comments. They have to be postmarked by that date.

25 Everyone is encouraged to give written comments

1 and they can be hand delivered, e-mailed, mailed or
2 faxed to Ms. Vinson here with the Federal Highway
3 Administration or Ms. Betty Fauber, the Knik Arm
4 Bridge and Toll Authority. And their contacting
5 information is on the back page of the Draft
6 Environmental Impact Statement Public Comment
7 Process Overview handout.

8 There's also a project website where you can
9 submit e-mail comments. The web address is
10 WWW.KnikArmBridge.com.

11 I'd like to finally say how much I appreciate
12 the participation and help of the people in the
13 Mat-Su. And I'd like to extend my personal thanks
14 to all the staff people here that have made my visit
15 such a pleasure and so much help to me and to the
16 members sitting at the front table.

17 And finally, my thanks to my long-suffering
18 court reporter sitting here for these many hours.
19 I'd like to publicly thank her as well.

20 With that, this October 18th, 2006 public
21 hearing on the Knik Arm Crossing Project Draft
22 Environmental Impact Statement and Section 4(f)
23 Evaluation is being closed and this matter is
24 adjourned.

25 (Whereupon the public hearing was concluded.)

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REPORTER'S CERTIFICATE

I, Britney E. Chonka, Court Reporter, hereby
certify:

That I am a Court Reporter for Alaska Stenotype
Reporters and Notary Public in and for the State of
Alaska at large. I certify Hereby that the forgoing
transcript is a true and correct transcript of said
proceedings taken before me at the time and place stated
in the caption therein.

I further certify that I am not of counsel to
either of the parties hereto or otherwise interested in
said cause.

In witness whereof, I hereunto set my hand and
affix my official seal this 23rd day of October, 2006.

BRITNEY E. CHONKA, REPORTER

Notary Public - State of Alaska

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KNIK ARM CROSSING DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT

AND

DRAFT SECTION 4(F) ENVALUATION OPEN HOUSE ORAL COMMENTS

Commencing at 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m

Monday, October 16, 2006

Captain Hook Hotel

Anchorage, Alaska

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OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC COMMENTS

PAGE

Comments

3

Reported by: Rosie S. Scott, CSR and Valerie Martinez

1 Anchorage, Alaska, October 16, 2006

2 OPEN HOUSE PUBLIC HEARING COMMENTS

3 JANEL WALTON: I'm Janel J-A-N-E-L, Walton,
4 W-A-L-T-O-N. I live at 433 East Harvard Avenue, Number
5 2, Anchorage, 99501. That means I am a resident of
6 Government Hill.

7 My questions are, Number one: Why wasn't the
8 previous reports done by Alaska DOT and the Federal
9 Highway Administration in the 1950s, '70s and '80s, why
10 were those not included in this current Draft EIS?

11 Why wasn't it that the 1984 Draft EIS
12 designated a completely different route for the bridge
13 than did this current EIS?

14 Why is it that the 1984 Draft EIS designated
15 the route going through Kern Point as being the most
16 dangerous, even though it was the shortest and thus
17 designated a route upstream that was a longer bridge, yet
18 in a shallower area of the Knik Arm; why was it that that
19 was designated as the preferred route, which consequently
20 went through military land?

21 Why is it that the 1984 report and the '72
22 report had no problems going through military land, and
23 did not have any concerns about that being a military
24 impact, yet the current Draft EIS does, contrary to those
25 previous EIS reports?

1 Why was the Government Hill Community Council
2 PowerPoint Presentation at the contact sensitive design
3 meetings in December of 2005, not included in the Draft
4 EIS?

5 Why was it that the conceptual drawings that
6 came out of the contact sensitive design meetings in
7 December 2005, why were those not included in the Draft
8 EIS?

9 Why is it that the mitigation requests that the
10 neighborhood came up with at the contact sensitive design
11 meeting is not, in detail, listed out in the Draft
12 Environmental Impact Statement?

13 I want to say additional studies regarding the
14 beluga whale population being listed as an endangered
15 species, there needs to be additional studies on this
16 issue and not from an agency, namely KABATA, who spends
17 \$50,000 in attorney fees trying to combat the beluga
18 whales being listed as an endangered species. It needs
19 to be an impartial agency who does this research. That's
20 all I've got for now.

21 I just wanted to add that if there is any --
22 there shouldn't be any routes going through Government
23 Hill. However, in the event that one is chosen, it
24 should -- whatever route is chosen, it should not allow
25 any kind of surface routes through Government Hill.

1 There's too many traffic and logistic problems.

2 And also that the Draft EIS did not address
3 anything having to do with all of the children of
4 Government Hill are required to walk to the elementary
5 school every day. So there's quite a bit of children
6 foot traffic. And the EIS doesn't at all address the
7 fact that those kids are potentially going to end up
8 getting hit trying to cross the surface route that has
9 10,000 cars a day on it.

10 It doesn't address how these kids are going to
11 get to school across this huge construction zone. It
12 doesn't address how these kids are going to get to school
13 through all of this traffic even after the major
14 construction zone is cleared. So that needs to be
15 addressed.

16 Something else. Regarding Section 4(f) park
17 lands, none of the parks should be taken out, nothing
18 having to do with parks should be taken out. Harvard
19 Park is heavily used by the children and adults
20 equally -- the tennis courts, the basketball courts, use
21 of the major sledding area for children. Sunset Park is
22 also in addition used heavily as a major sledding area,
23 playground and so forth, picnic section, heavily used by
24 the neighborhood. And none of these things should be
25 removed or taken away from Government Hill. There's not

1 a good reason.

2 Also, one of the reasons why the Draft EIS has
3 pointed to the fact that we can't do any kind of routes
4 through military land, is due to the runway and the
5 elephant cage.

6 The military said that the elephant cage needs
7 a one-mile radius around it, yet one of the routes that
8 goes through Government Hill will put it below the bluff,
9 coming around the military base. And that is within the
10 one-mile radius of the elephant cage. So they're being
11 contradictory in whether or not they can or cannot be
12 within the mile radius of the elephant cage.

13 Also, there's no mention of the fact that that
14 elephant cage should be decommissioned within a couple of
15 years. There needs to be more study about whether or not
16 they can go through that area if that elephant cage has
17 been removed. That's it.

18 The Army Corps of Engineers issued a letter
19 approximately within the last year expressing concerns
20 about the impact of the bridge on the environment and
21 some other issues. That letter was not included in the
22 Draft EIS. It should be included, as well as the
23 comments in the Army Corps of Engineers that basically
24 states their strong concerns about the stability of the
25 bridge, and also the environment and it's impact on the

1 bridge. That's it.

2 MR. BLATCHFORD: My name is Joel, J-O-E-L
3 Blatchford, B-L-A-T-C-H-F-O-R-D. My mailing address is
4 P.O. Box 1126 Kasilof, Alaska.

5 I am a chief, but I'm an Inupiat Chief. I come
6 from up north, but I've grown up here -- born and raised
7 up here in Anchorage. I've studied this Inlet and I've
8 told everybody everything about this Inlet, the oil
9 companies, the city, the state, about the belugas. I was
10 first one on the ESA listing for the endangered species
11 list.

12 Not only that, all the information that is
13 given about the belugas, nobody from KABATA has hired any
14 of the hunters to come out and really give them true
15 information about the whales, appearance or what have
16 you. And all of this is known by all of us hunters.

17 Conoco will call me up and they'll hire me or
18 any of the hunters right now if they had a problem right
19 now out there in the Inlet. But so far the Port
20 Authority, Bridge Authority nobody has no interest in
21 what the hunters have to say.

22 Research that has been taken is not true
23 research because all the research that is on any of this
24 paperwork comes from whales from other places. The
25 belugas have no sight in the Inlet, so they become like a

1 blind animal or like humans when you go blind, your
2 senses become more sensitive.

3 Like when we fly over them and encounter them,
4 they'll start to hide because they're that sensitive.
5 Even at 800 feet they can feel the props -- the noise
6 from the props and then they will hide. That's why they
7 have a hard time getting their true accurate count.

8 And when you have people -- you hire that just
9 know what a beluga looks like, you're not getting the
10 true information because anybody -- you can hire a sixth
11 grader and say, yeah, I know what it looks like, but if
12 they don't know the pattern, they'll never know where to
13 go to get the information on the whale. If they don't
14 see it, it might be diving for a long time.

15 And that's just my point that I have to make
16 with this. And why did you guys use 50,000 of your
17 dollars to go after me on the whales? I mean, I've --
18 the city through all this whole thing, when I went to
19 Washington everybody came after me again. And now it's
20 happening all over again. You can put that 50,000 to
21 something else. Thank you.

22 MS. BLATCHFORD: My name is D.J. Blatchford. I
23 do have a question. I do have a question. I am from the
24 Kasilof area. I was born in Seward. But I've grown up
25 around a lot of the water, Cook Inlet, traveled Coastal,

1 traveled interior. I come from a long line of whale
2 hunters.

3 My question is, I would like to know what gave
4 whatever group the right to -- I guess it's the Knik Arm
5 Crossing group or committee or whatever they're called --
6 \$50,000 to not list the belugas on the endangered when
7 the belugas are a very intricate part of this Knik Arm
8 Crossing? And that's basically my question. Why would
9 they do that? And why do they not contact the real whale
10 hunters, instead of just ones like Tionic when I know
11 that some of our whale hunters went over there and taught
12 some of their people how to whale hunt and how to care
13 for the meat properly because they did not whale for --
14 between 30 and 35 years. And in doing that they tried to
15 say that because we stood down for five, we lost our
16 hunting right. We never gave up our hunting right. And
17 we stated that in all the court documents that we did --
18 was we wanted to show the effect of people not doing it,
19 not touching it.

20 And yet they never gave up or stood down for
21 anything that they believed in. In fact, they kept
22 their whale hunts up, except for the 30 to 35 years that
23 they stood down before. And they tried to say that we,
24 as whale hunters, gave up our right, which was not a
25 fact.

1 I'd like to see the groups pull together and
2 work with the information on a more fair basis. And if
3 they can afford to give up 50,000 so that they will not
4 sign the belugas up on the endangered, then where does
5 that money -- you know, who does it profit? Who does it
6 benefit?

7 And I sure don't think it benefits the people
8 of Alaska. Outsiders who don't know anything it might.
9 And to me it looks like it's all political. And I don't
10 think that's fair to the average individual Alaskan,
11 whale hunter or individual person. Thank you.

12 MR. ULMER: David Ulmer, 2221 Muldoon Road,
13 Number 735, Anchorage, 99504.

14 I'm concerned about the Square Dance Center,
15 which is on Government Hill. It's 432 East Harvard
16 Avenue. The Degan Street access will eliminate the
17 building. And I've been talking to Vivian, who is with
18 your project. I'm not sure if the building will be
19 replaced, if there isn't another suitable building in
20 town, although it is marked as being with an "R" for
21 relation I guess that is.

22 And I am also not sure what the city's intent
23 would be since it's a city building, and how much
24 enthusiasm they would have for putting up another
25 building. It's my personal thought is, I don't think

1 they would be very inclined to do something like that.

2 But I don't know for sure.

3 As far as other buildings in town that have the
4 amenities that the Square Dance Center does, I don't --
5 right offhand I couldn't tell you of one that's in town,
6 although there certainly might be. So I'm fearful if the
7 project does go through Degan Street, that that will be
8 the end of the Square Dance Center in Anchorage, which
9 would eliminate the square dancers, the Brown dancers and
10 us cloggers.

11 So I don't know. That's my fear if the project
12 goes through. That's it.

13 MS. WALTON: I wanted to say that my
14 understanding, that after the contact sensitive design
15 meetings occurred, that there was an agreement that there
16 would be further contact sensitive design meetings before
17 the final EIS was put into place.

18 So my expectation, as a resident of Government
19 Hill, and one of the people who was involved in that
20 initial sensitive contact design meeting is that we will
21 continue with that process. And we will get the
22 mitigation request firmed up in writing and part of the
23 final EIS before it is put together.

24 MS. BLATCHFORD: This is D.J. Blatchford again.
25 I am wondering on a state level, and on a federal level

1 which entity will -- or has there been a project put
2 together for insurance of this? If we have a Tsunami, or
3 if we have an earthquake, some kind of disaster, flooding
4 of some type, and it got washed away, or it got shook
5 away, or something happened with this crossing, who would
6 be the entity to insure it so that it can be rebuilt?
7 Thank you.

8 MR. ULMER: This is David Ulmer. I was here
9 before. I just want to get it on the record, that I just
10 found out that the building -- the Square Dance Center is
11 a historical building, or a possible historical building.
12 And I just want everybody to -- I'm sure they already
13 know, but I want it on the record that it is a historical
14 building. And take that into consideration for the
15 design of the streets. That's all.

16 MS. CALCOTE: My name is Delice Calcote. My
17 mailing address is in care of P.O. Box 4491, Palmer,
18 99645. I am the secretary for the Cook Inlet Marine
19 Mammal Council. And -- but as the intertribal
20 coordinator for Cook Inlet Treaty Tribes.

21 I saw this morning the article about the
22 beluga. And I'd like to see this budget that says
23 they've got 50,000 to fight the Endangered Species Act
24 listing for the beluga in Cook Inlet. And I'd like to
25 know who the insuring company is. And I'd like to know

1 if it's going to be one million per incident.

2 And I protest, deny and object to any essential
3 and critical habitat of marine mammal being changed or
4 affected by the bridge. And I would like to bring
5 everybody's attention to U.S. v. Alaska Supreme Court
6 decision, June 18, 1997, where the state of Alaska has
7 tried twice to claim some sort of jurisdiction over Cook
8 Inlet.

9 And to bring it to everybody's attention, Cook
10 Inlet is a historical bay and water under international
11 law. And speaking of international law, the UN treaty
12 and the covenants, and under the covenant of civil and
13 political rights, under Article 1, Section 2, no people
14 may be deprived of it, means of subsistence -- and I
15 don't mean the non-Native use. We have historical use
16 here in Cook Inlet. And ours is prior to any statehood,
17 which under the UN Treaty, Article 76(b), we the people,
18 the Eskimos, Indians and Aleut were to have the
19 education, and the opportunity to vote if we wanted to be
20 independent or self-governing.

21 And I suppose we could have another third,
22 which would be statehood. But seeing how Article 5,
23 Section 1, of the Constitution of the state of Alaska,
24 said that under suffrage, said that we had to take a
25 test to make sure that we were reading and writing

1 English, and that we didn't get to vote. We therefore,
2 thank you very much, are not a party to statehood. And,
3 in fact, the Statehood Act, Section 4, protects our
4 rights as noticed in Article 12, Section 12, the
5 disclaimer clause.

6 And in U.S. v. Alaska, the disclaimer clause
7 was used by the United States against the state of Alaska
8 to protect our rights. And I find that this bridge, that
9 it's going to disrupt and damage further the beluga in
10 particular, among the many mammals that are here in Cook
11 Inlet.

12 I believe an injunction is in order. Thank you
13 for this venue, and the opportunity to say my peace.
14 Thank you very much.

15 (Open house morning comments concluded at 3:00
16 p.m.)

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1 Open House Commencing at 4p.m.

2 STEPHANIE KESLER: Stephanie Kesler,
3 S-T-E-P-H-A-N-I-E, K-E-S-L-E-R. 2106 Castner
4 Circle -- Castner is spelled C-A-S-T-N-E-R --
5 99517. And I'm representing the Government Hill
6 Community Council.

7 The Anchorage Access Solution. Government
8 Hill developed an alternative called the Anchorage
9 Access Solution. That solution is the road -- the
10 access road comes around behind AT&T, Government
11 Hill School, and then goes through a cut and
12 covered tunnel through the Government Hill business
13 district and then dumps onto the A/C Couplet.

14 This solution was developed during a series
15 of workshops and meetings with KABATA and HDR.
16 Phase one is a feasible solution from an
17 engineering point of view. It also offers the
18 opportunity to work with the current business
19 owners to revitalize our business district and does
20 not destroy any homes. Families would not be
21 forced to move, but the Anchorage Access Solution
22 was dismissed out of hand because of impact on
23 military housing and potential issues with phase
24 two.

25 There are multiple options for phase two,

1 including phase two of the Degan alternative, but
2 those options were never explored. Instead, one
3 option going through Elm Street cost the entire
4 Anchorage Access Solution to be rejected because of
5 economic justice issues.

6 There are so many ways this could work but
7 FHWA and KABATA refuse to talk and explore.
8 Instead they have shut down all talks and accused
9 the Government Hill Community Council of attempting
10 to offload the impact onto low income families.

11 The Accelerated Process. From section 1.4 of
12 the Knik Arm Crossing Scoping Summary Report on
13 page 1-3. Because the proposed Knik Arm Crossing
14 project was deemed nationally significant, FHWA
15 selected it for participation in the NEPA team
16 building initiative.

17 The goal of this FHWA initiative is to
18 improve the quality and timeliness of
19 transportation development projects while insuring
20 stewardship of the human and natural environment.
21 In addition, the team-building initiative aims to
22 assess potentially controversial impacts early in
23 the NEPA process, use conflict resolution
24 techniques, build public trust through an effective
25 public involvement process, identify opportunities

1 to integrate innovative technology and data tools,
2 and improve documentation of impacts from the
3 proposed project and records.

4 Our experience in the process in the
5 team-building initiative. For the past two years, we've
6 been consumed by the EIS process. We've devoted
7 hundreds of hours attending countless meetings,
8 preparing responses, to research, et cetera. Our
9 experience of the process has been almost diametrically
10 opposed to the description I just read. We have been
11 shut out and isolated at almost every step of the way.
12 From the very beginning, we've asked for joint meetings
13 with the other stakeholders. Each of our requests were
14 rejected. This is not anyone's idea of effective team
15 building, conflict resolution, or building of the public
16 trust.

17 At each step of the process we've been
18 encouraged to submit our comments to take advantage
19 of opportunities to testify. While we've done that
20 time and time again and at each instance our
21 comments have been duly noted, cataloged, and then
22 completely ignored. The ultimate impact of our
23 comments and participation has been use of time and
24 resources to catalog those comments and then figure
25 out ways to explain the comments away. I would

1 like to see just one example of where our input had
2 actually made any substantial difference in the
3 process.

4 We had one ray of hope last December and
5 January when we engaged in a very intense series of
6 context sensitive design meetings with FHWA. The
7 Anchorage Access Solution was the product of those
8 meetings and then the Anchorage Access Solution was
9 completely and rudely rejected. It was a clear
10 slap in the face and we can't help but think it was
11 intended.

12 All of our work for the past two years was
13 done on our own time with our own money. This work
14 was performed outside of our day jobs and away from
15 our families. Unlike FHWA and KABATA we don't get
16 paid for our work. The irony of the situation is
17 painful. We're fighting for our families, our
18 homes, and our historic neighborhood while KABATA
19 sits back, works the system, and rakes in the
20 bucks.

21 LES GARA: Representative Les Gara. I
22 represent the Government Hill Community and the
23 State Legislature. 716 West Fourth Avenue,
24 Anchorage.

25 At every turn the concerns of the Government

1 Hill community have been dismissed by both the
2 State Knik Arm Bridge Authority and the Federal
3 Highway Administration. Let me give you a few
4 examples: the Government Hill community's greatest
5 concern is that an access to the bridge will be
6 designed in a way that it doesn't destroy parts of
7 the Government Hill community. Those concerns have
8 never ever been taken seriously. They've never
9 been fairly analyzed. They've never been fairly
10 considered. Every meeting that Government Hill
11 community members have gone to and arranged with
12 the federal and State authorities, their concerns
13 have been dismissed out of hand.

14 In 2005 an Anchorage Daily News article came
15 out in June that showed the State and federal
16 authorities had never even considered alternative
17 access routes that wouldn't damage the Government
18 Hill community. An interview with the base
19 commander in that Daily News article showed that
20 nobody from the State or federal agency had ever
21 even gone to Elmendorf officials to ask about
22 possible access routes across Elmendorf Air Force
23 Base. Those are the logical access routes that
24 wouldn't destroy any community or part of a
25 community.

1 When asked, the Elmendorf officials said they
2 would be perfectly willing to allow an access
3 across Elmendorf Air Force Base, that they could do
4 it in a way that wouldn't involve any national
5 security concerns. But through the summer of 2005
6 nobody had ever asked them, nobody from the federal
7 or State government had ever asked them about
8 access routes.

9 After that story came out in June of 2005,
10 the State then presented maybe one, maybe two
11 access routes across Elmendorf. The Elmendorf
12 officials said every access route you present to
13 us, we will consider and evaluate. Only two were
14 presented to them. There are many ways to go
15 across Elmendorf Air Force Base that the State and
16 federal agencies have not presented as alternatives
17 for the Elmendorf officials to consider. There are
18 ways to go across Elmendorf Air Force Base that
19 won't substantially increase the cost of this
20 project, and more importantly, that won't destroy
21 neighborhoods, cut neighborhoods in half, or damage
22 neighborhoods.

23 What else is there that shows this process
24 has been geared towards rejecting the concerns of
25 the Government Hill community? This is a very

1 complex subject. It involves a lot of engineering
2 and environmental data. Public testimony has been
3 limited to three minutes or five minutes maximum
4 for a group representative. There's no rational
5 way that members of the public can present their
6 case to the officials sitting in the public hearing
7 room in three minutes when the document they're
8 commenting on is over two thousand pages in length.

9 Why else do we know that their concerns are
10 not being taken seriously? This is a very complex
11 subject, one of the most expensive projects in
12 State history, one of the largest projects in State
13 history, and the federal statute that governs the
14 amount of public notice and comment that is allowed
15 says a minimum of 45 days public notice and comment
16 shall be provided. That's the minimum. When a
17 project is more complex, when an issue is more
18 complex, more public notice and comment periods
19 shall be allowed.

20 Federal and State agencies overseeing this
21 project kept the public notice and comment period
22 to the minimum of 45 days. A minimum of 45 days
23 public comment and notice, three minutes of public
24 testimony, and the rejection of every legitimate
25 concern the Government Hill community had presented

1 shows that, to date, this process has been rigged
2 in favor of ignoring legitimate community concerns
3 and concerns that are required to be considered
4 under federal law.

5 I hope that at some point the legal
6 requirements provided in the statutes will be
7 followed, that more alternatives for accessing the
8 Knik Arm Crossing will be considered, and that
9 alternatives that do not damage the Government Hill
10 community, Anchorage's oldest community, will be
11 considered. I hope that happens, it hasn't
12 happened so far.

13 ERNEST STUTZER: Ernest Stutzer, S-T-U-T-Z-E-R.
14 E-R-N-E-S-T is Ernest. My address is 5809 Denali
15 Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99518.

16 I would like the accounting, where the money
17 came from for the authority, and what it went for.
18 I would like that to be public so that people can
19 get a record of that, get an accounting of the
20 whole thing.

21 JIM McMAHON: My name is Jim McMahon,
22 M-C-M-A-H-O-N. I've been a resident of Government
23 Hill since 1966. I've been in Anchorage for 49
24 years. And my concern is, I live right by Degan.
25 I may be a block away. Will it take my house?

1 That's my home. I've lived there, like I say,
2 since 1966 and that's my concern.

3 Are they going to build it? Where's the
4 money coming from? Who's going to pay for it? Me?
5 Evidently I'm going to pay for it in my taxes and
6 that's what I'm concerned about, the cost. So far
7 I haven't heard anything, no comments on the houses
8 it's going to take, what's needed, nothing.

9 JO ANN STROMBERG: My name is Jo Ann Stromberg,
10 J-O, space, capital A-N-N. Stromberg is spelled
11 S-T-R-O-M-B-E-R-G. My address is 10101 Slalom
12 Drive, Anchorage, Alaska 99507.

13 My comment is that I support the project. I
14 think this is a very worthwhile thing to go forward
15 with. I think it will be overall good for the
16 State and provide some expansion into areas that we
17 need to expand into.

18 MARJORIE ELLIS: Marjorie Ellis,
19 M-A-R-J-O-R-I-E, E-L-L-I-S. And I live at 710 Ash
20 Place on Government Hill. Definitely, that's why
21 I'm here.

22 I have been a resident there for 55 -- 56
23 years this October. We built our house because we
24 had signed a contract with the Alaska Railroad to
25 build a livable dwelling. This was long before it

1 went into the City of Anchorage.

2 When the railroad and the federal government
3 made an agreement that this land would be patent --
4 could be patented, I wrote -- we tried. We went
5 down to the banks and everybody was very willing to
6 loan us the money to do our building. We had
7 signed a contract with the railroad to build a
8 livable dwelling within a three-year period. When
9 they found out that we lived on Government Hill,
10 there was no way the banks could loan it because
11 there was question. They knew that it was going
12 into the Bureau of Land Management -- still
13 everything was under the Department of Interior at
14 the time.

15 I wrote a letter to Delegate Bartlett, this
16 was during territorial days, and explained the
17 situation. Eight days later, 240 patents were at
18 the Department for us to purchase. We didn't have
19 to purchase ours because we already had built a
20 livable dwelling. Then we had the urban renewal
21 thing come in and that took care of the financing
22 for the people. Very few people were permitted to
23 keep their property, unfortunately.

24 However, with this projected Knik Arm
25 Crossing, I have no objection to the bridge. I do

1 object to the possibility of Government Hill --
2 this is my home. I have two deceased daughters who
3 planted trees and they're lovely, lovely big spruce
4 trees now. My other granddaughter has planted
5 lilac bushes. My daughter has planted rose bushes.
6 There's just no amount of money that could replace
7 these.

8 I have not been officially notified at any
9 time that my property was one that was involved in
10 this, and I think that is just -- I have learned
11 from other sources that it was involved, but at no
12 time have I been officially notified. I object
13 strenuously to dividing Government Hill.

14 MARK DERD: Mark Derd, D-E-R-D. The only thing
15 I'd like to say is, I'd like it to go across
16 because it would save a lot of time, money, gas.
17 It would just be more convenient and -- I don't
18 know what else. I've been wanting to go across for
19 a long time. The sooner, the better.

20 MARK BUTLER: My name is Mark Butler, M-A-R-K,
21 B-U-T-L-E-R. I live at 831 West 19th Avenue, near
22 downtown Anchorage.

23 I am absolutely against this project until
24 and if the highway-to-highway project is ever built
25 so that rather than pushing 10 to 45,000 cars a day

1 down C Street and hurting downtown Anchorage,
2 instead it would be connected to a freeway project.

3 PHYLLIS ADAMS: Phyllis Adams, 720 Birch
4 Street, Anchorage, 99501.

5 I think more thought needs to be put into
6 this project. I've been a Government Hill resident
7 for 30 years and I'm speaking on behalf of the
8 residents. The school is an emergent program that
9 serves children from all over Anchorage.

10 My main concern is that it is unhealthy --
11 the project is unhealthy for all concerned. Number
12 one, air pollution from car exhaust. We already
13 have pollution from the exhaust from the planes
14 from Elmendorf. We already have exhaust from the
15 railroad yards, and now this extra traffic exhaust
16 will contribute to problems.

17 Number two, noise pollution. I think that
18 additional noise from traffic, from cars, will be
19 increased in addition to the jet traffic and
20 railroad noise pollution.

21 The third one would be traffic congestion on
22 the bridge into downtown Anchorage. After an event
23 such as an air show at Elmendorf, the traffic is
24 backed up from the light all the way, practically,
25 to the bridge to C Street. I'm concerned about

1 what they plan to do if there's an accident, if
2 there's a terrorist attack. You know, are people
3 going to sit on the bridge two or three hours until
4 a decision is made?

5 Government Hill residents used to have
6 another exit off of L, but that is closed due to
7 terrorist plans at the airport -- due to safety
8 issues at the airport because of terrorist
9 activities. We don't have any other way out.
10 Also, right now at the present we are going to, on
11 the bridge -- we have icy conditions, several
12 accidents happen.

13 On the 20-year project, the phase two
14 project, where are they going to vent this exhaust
15 from the tunnel that will be built? That's what
16 I'm concerned about. I think more thought needs to
17 be put into all these issues because they are all
18 very important for all concerned.

19 I'm also -- one other concern, those of us
20 living only two blocks away whose property will not
21 be acquired, I am concerned about our property
22 value going down. What are they going to do for
23 people like us because it will go down?

24 There has been no thorough study on air
25 quality. I just talked to the people and they said

1 air quality, as far as railroad exhaust, the tent
2 farms, and the exhaust from testing of the jet
3 engines of the company, so that's very important.

4 KENT ADAMS: My name is Kent Adams. It's
5 K-E-N-T, A-D-A-M-S. It's 720 Birch Street, which
6 is up on Government Hill. And I have a couple
7 comments.

8 One, I think I need to go back to the early
9 stages to before you can really fairly re-evaluate
10 the alternatives and what I mean by that is, when
11 you fix the bridge the location -- which I assume
12 is an engineering concern, which I understand --
13 and then you assume that the traffic is going to go
14 downtown, that really leaves you very narrow
15 alternatives. In other words, they all go right
16 through Government Hill -- understandably, because
17 the straight line between A and B, the bridge
18 location and downtown really doesn't open the range
19 of alternatives -- and that's what my concern is.

20 The bridge location may be fixed although
21 there maybe a couple of engineering alternatives
22 that are acceptable, and the decision to send
23 traffic all downtown seems like something that
24 could be all re-evaluated. In other words, even if
25 you left the bridge location fixed, if you're

1 looking at putting traffic into Boniface or some
2 other alternative, then that, of course, changes
3 the direct line, A to B; and, therefore, we have
4 lots of other alternatives. So my point is, I
5 don't think they really looked at all those
6 alternatives and so they're pretty narrowly focused
7 on one or two alternatives for Government Hill.

8 The other is the traffic. It seems to me
9 that there's a conflict between the idea of the
10 bridge being self-supporting through its tolls and
11 the infrastructure that has been developed.
12 Specifically, the one that terminates on a,
13 basically, stoplight T-intersection.

14 And so it seems to me that that's
15 inconsistent that on the one hand they're talking
16 about the amount of traffic that's going to be
17 generated and pay for the bridge and on the other
18 hand it's going to be dumped into a T-intersection
19 with a stoplight on a grade on a curve, which
20 doesn't seem like a reasonable alternative.

21 And as I said, it seems that looking at both
22 alternatives rather than thinking in terms of if
23 you're going to have the traffic then you're going
24 to have the infrastructure to support it. If it's
25 not going to generate the traffic, then it's not

1 going to pay the tolls.

2 And one third comment was about the -- I have
3 forgotten which alternative it was, I think the
4 Erickson through Government Hill -- but basically
5 cuts the park in half, Sunset Park, and I didn't
6 see any provisions for a pedestrian walkway or
7 anything over the top of that or under that in
8 order to connect the park back together if that
9 does get constructed.

10 (Open house morning comments concluded at 9:00
11 p.m.)

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KNIK ARM CROSSING DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATE MENT
AND
DRAFT SECTION 4(F) ENVALUATION OPEN HOUSE ORAL COMMENTS

Commencing at 11:00a.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Wednesday, October 18, 2006

Lake Lucille Best Western

Wasilla, Alaska

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COMMENTS

PAGE

Open House Comments

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Reported by: Rosie S. Scott, CSR

1 Wasilla, Alaska, Wednesday, October 18, 2006

2 OPEN HOUSE COMMENTS

3 MR. CHMIELEWSKI: My name is Mike Chmielewski.
4 My address is 325 East Fireweed in Palmer, Alaska. And I
5 am President of Friends Of Mat-Su, and represent that
6 group in this comment.

7 My points are a fairly simple and few. First
8 of all, 45 days is the minimum amount of time agencies
9 can allow for public comment of the draft EIS, and the
10 DEIS is 800 pages long. And I believe that the public
11 deserves more than the minimum amount of time to review
12 and comment. Therefore, I'm requesting a 90-day comment
13 period.

14 There also were a variety of alternatives that
15 were proposed in the beginning of the process that seem
16 to have been ignored. They're certainly not included in
17 the DEIS; alternatives such as the commuter, cargo rail,
18 ferries, van pool, car pool, incentives for the Glenn
19 Highway, improve public transit options in Anchorage and
20 so on. They should also be included as congestion relief
21 along with the bridge.

22 In terms of cost factors, I believe that the
23 cost still remains at \$600 million, with 93 million
24 committed, even though I believe that energy and
25 construction costs have risen. And we don't seem to have

1 a clear funding plan for completion of the project.

2 We also must address the real traffic and
3 infrastructure needs in the Mat-Su. We have some serious
4 concerns that these needs will be put on the back burner
5 if all the resources and funding are dedicated to
6 building the Knik Arm Bridge. Obviously, the most recent
7 suggestion regarding the cost for just the one
8 north-south route through Anchorage would be roughly
9 equivalent to the bridge itself.

10 Finally, the Mat-Su is the fastest growing
11 region. The growth is outpacing our infrastructure at
12 the present time, even without the bridge. So what we
13 are looking for is more focus on real planning money for
14 both ends of the bridge in order to deal with all of
15 those issues that run from road upgrades, to growth and
16 development in the Point McKenzie area, emergency
17 services, new schools, and so on.

18 I thank you for your attention to this request.

19 MR. KERNER: My name is Guy Kerner, G-U-Y,
20 K-E-R-N-E-R. My address is 321 West Manor, M-A-N-O-R,
21 Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska, 99501.

22 I was next door in the hearing room, but they
23 cut me off. They said I only had three minutes, and they
24 rang the bell. I just had a few more comments.

25 One of my concerns about the bridge, and the

1 traffic flow, and the development of that area where the
2 bridge is going to open up across from Anchorage is its
3 impact on Anchorage.

4 Like I said in the hearing, I'm a lifelong
5 Alaskan. I've lived here my whole life. I have been out
6 of state for school. And one of the places I went to
7 school was Washington, D.C. And I found that in D.C., it
8 faces a similar problem that I think this bridge may be
9 creating for Anchorage itself.

10 In Washington, D.C. the suburbs, the people who
11 worked in Washington, D.C. lived in Maryland and
12 Virginia. And they take the bridges and connectors into
13 Washington D.C., use all the services, the roads, fire
14 department, et cetera, and they would leave. And the
15 impact on the city of Washington was fairly significant
16 because their ability to raise money for road systems,
17 repair, fire, police, ambulance, hospital, et cetera, was
18 limited based upon the population as existed within the
19 boundaries of the District of Columbia.

20 Here, if they develop this area, I don't
21 believe people who will eventually live in that area
22 across from Anchorage are going to drive to Wasilla for
23 their services. They're going to take the bridge across,
24 and they're going to use Anchorage services, road
25 systems, surface streets. And it seems to me, that even

1 though the property values and mill rates it may impact
2 or benefit the Mat-Su. As far as revenue, there's going
3 to be no revenue sharing that I'm aware of with the city
4 of Anchorage.

5 So there's going to be all the impact on the
6 city. I'm not necessarily saying diverse, but it's going
7 to add a lot more traffic, a lot more people to the city
8 of Anchorage. As far as using it, who is going to pay
9 for the impact?

10 I've also reviewed the plans for the connection
11 to Anchorage. And they say that Phase II eventually will
12 connect to Ingra-Gambell. But I guess I don't believe
13 that. It seems like the plan is just to build a cut and
14 cover tunnel, go around that same sharp corner that
15 exists right now -- right next to the Anchorage Square
16 Dance Club, and dump all this traffic on to the A/C
17 Streets.

18 And if anyone drives Fifth or Sixth Avenue or A
19 or C at present time, they know that at almost at any
20 time during the day, except late at night, it is a very
21 crowded intersection, there's not a lot of room for
22 additional traffic, and now they plan to dump Valley
23 traffic into that same intersection.

24 Furthermore, it seems to be dumping traffic, as
25 far as anyone who wants to do, like from the Mat-Su down

1 to the Kenai connect to the Seward Highway, it's not
2 attaching it to the freeway systems that will take them
3 south. Basically, the initial phase will dump all this
4 traffic into A and C, and then they've got to make
5 surface street connections to get to the freeway.

6 Again, like I said at the beginning of my
7 comment in the hearing, I'm not necessarily opposed to
8 this bridge, but I just don't see very wise planning.
9 And it just seems to be a push to benefit certain people.
10 And it may be a political push based upon who's getting
11 the funding for this. And it seems like it's just going
12 to benefit landowners and developers on the other side
13 across from Anchorage. And I'm not really seeing the
14 benefits to Anchorage itself.

15 And give me a second to review my notes. I
16 think that's it. Thanks.

17 (Open House Comments concluded at 9:00 p.m.)

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