



For Immediate Release

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KABATA PLEASED THAT THE AMATS POLICY COMMITTEE HAS RESCINDED PRIOR ACTION----PLANS MOVE AHEAD TO FINALIZE THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROCESS.

(Anchorage, AK), August 31, 2009: The Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) is pleased that the AMATS Policy Committee rescinded prior action taken under the City's previous administration that proposed to alter the scope and timing of the Knik Arm Crossing.

On August 18, 2009, a court settlement was reached between all parties agreeing to rescind action taken by the Policy Committee in June that did not follow the adopted public participation plan and federal regulations. The cities of Houston and Wasilla have legitimate interests in the Knik Arm Crossing project and their communities will be impacted by decisions on the type of bridge to be built, when it is built, or whether it is built. KABATA moved to join with these impacted communities to ensure that the proper public process was employed in decisions affecting the bridge.

Andrew Niemiec, executive director of KABATA stated, "Legitimate public process is good public policy and all parties unanimously agreed that was what needed to be at the forefront." Niemiec continued, "The KABATA team looks forward to cooperative planning. The Knik Arm Crossing is a critical infrastructure development project for Alaska and we need to get it right."

On August 27th, the AMATS Policy Committee remanded the Knik Arm Crossing back to their Technical Committee for additional committee review and recommendation to the Policy Committee. On September 24th, the AMATS Policy Committee may once again decide to begin a public process to delay the project. It is important to note that no action by AMATS is required and the KABATA team continues to oppose any efforts to delay this much needed connection for Alaskans.

Senator Linda Menard, Vice-Chair of Senate Transportation Committee stated, "The importance of the state to get behind the Knik Arm Crossing is imperative. Smart development, in my view, will take place at Point MacKenzie following the construction of the bridge. Already, construction of the Goose Creek Correctional facility is underway, proving the potential of the area and the need for better, quicker and safer access."

Michael Foster, KABATA Board Chairman stated, "There is no doubt in my mind that we have a legitimate, financeable and critically needed infrastructure project here that needs to be built." Foster continued, "Not only does the Knik Arm Crossing support much needed economic stimulus, jobs and resource development, it also provides connectivity between communities and is an alternative safety corridor between ports, hospitals, as well as fire, police and disaster relief."



One of the additional benefits that the Knik Arm Crossing delivers is a significant reduction in carbon emissions – over 1,950,000 metric tons in the first 10 years.”

As reported by the press secretary for the Governor’s Office, "The Governor supports completing the federal permitting process... Once the process is complete, the state will review the project in light of all the facts and decide at that time how to move ahead."

The Policy Committee action restores the Knik Arm Crossing as part of the present Long Range Transportation Plan for Anchorage in the short-term portion of the plan. KABATA is moving forward to obtain a Record of Decision from the Federal Highway Administration and is also working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on issues related to the bridge and Cook Inlet belugas. The objective remains as identified by the Governor’s Office: to complete the permitting process so that all interested parties know what the project is. At that time, a meaningful assessment can be made by the public and private sectors on when and how the bridge is built.

About KABATA

The Alaska Legislature established the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority in 2003 under Alaska Statute 19.75 to “develop, stimulate, and advance the economic welfare of the state and further the development of public transportation systems in the vicinity of Upper Cook Inlet with construction of a bridge to span Knik Arm and connect the Municipality of Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.” Additional information about KABATA and the Knik Arm Crossing Project can be found on KABATA’s website at www.knikarmbridge.com.

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