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KNIK ARM CROSSING PROJECT SCOPING MEETING

Pages 1-98, inclusive

Commencing at 5:00 p.m.

Wednesday, July 13, 2005

Egan Convention Center

Anchorage, Alaska

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PUBLIC COMMENTS

PAGE

Welcome by Edrie Vinson
Comments and questions

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3

1 Anchorage, Alaska, Wednesday, July 13, 2005

2 (Welcome by Edrie Vinson.)

3 MS. VINSON: Well, I really appreciate all of
4 you coming. And it's such a beautiful evening. I'm sure
5 that you have other things you'd rather be doing. So I
6 appreciate the time that you're taking to help us with
7 this scoping process

8 I hope at the end of the evening you'll feel
9 like you've been heard before and you'll know what
10 signals you need to give us, if we have done a good job,
11 or if we need to go back and look at something else.

12 We want to make sure that all of your comments
13 or concerns or issues are on the table now, so that when
14 we start writing our documents you won't have any
15 surprises.

16 So thank you again very much for coming. And
17 again, your comments are very important. Thank you.

18 COMMENTS

19 MS. SLATONBARKER: So the first person on the
20 list is Joel Blatchford. And the second one is John
21 Toppenberg will be on deck. So if you'll come up and be
22 the first one. You'll have the hardest job here. If you
23 could just state your name, and spell your name, and then
24 let us know if it's a comment or a question.

25 MR. BLATCHFORD: Do you want both my names

1 spelled? First and last?

2 MS. SLATONBARKER: Probably first and last.

3 Hold on a little while we get our technical trouble
4 taken care of.

5 MR. BLATCHFORD: My name is Joel Blatchford,
6 J-O-E-L, is the first, B-L-A-T-C-H-F-O-R-D is the last.
7 I am chief of -- my family comes from Gullivan. I am a
8 chief, and I'm a whale hunter. And I have organized the
9 Last Marine 100 Committee. I could go through the whole
10 spiel. I'd have to look here and work with plenty of
11 judges. But, you know, my concern is the whale in
12 Anchorage and in Wasilla.

13 I just don't feel as though either side -- this
14 infrastructure on both sides are both wrong. Neither one
15 of them are ready. I mean, EPA will go ahead and give
16 you a permit. They give the city a permit to do whatever
17 they want. And they're still not correcting their stuff.

18 But, I mean, if you look at -- if you say
19 Anchorage is going to get as big as you say it is, you
20 got to fix this whole infrastructure up because if not,
21 people won't be able to go home. They'll be taking
22 another route. And every earthquake you have since this
23 is all -- we're in a funnel cup right here.

24 If you look right there at Knik, the Port is
25 going to expand. And they say they're not going to --

1 they don't want to interrupt the beluga whales, but
2 believe me, the Port is going to interrupt it, the bridge
3 is going to interrupt. And the Feds -- you guys have
4 spent more money on the belugas than the Feds have this
5 year, and I applaud you for that.

6 Really, this infrastructure over here is
7 totally wrong. These people over there are going to pay
8 such a high tax bracket, urban sprawl is going to hit
9 them real quick when they have to start paying for the
10 roads, and the power, and the gas, and the water. It's
11 going to come nice.

12 And here these folk over here -- I'm glad I
13 live in Kenai now. I mean, I've grown up -- I've watched
14 this whole place built from -- my dad built Elmendorf and
15 Ft. Rich. And they're still digging up wooden pipe that
16 my father laid to help keep them military boys going
17 because he was one himself -- while I was one too on that
18 base -- but I'm retired from there.

19 And I watched this place when the earthquake
20 was in '64. I watched all of Turnagain Arm go in there.
21 I was sitting right next to the school that fell in,
22 houses were going into the railroad building right down
23 there at the bottom of Government Hill.

24 You guys are going to have a mess. This bridge
25 is going to be closed more than it is opened. And both

1 your ambulances are going to be so busy. And these
2 people, I mean I hear rich complaining about taxes being
3 paid on this side so bad it's going to get worse.

4 And I hate to say that, but get this and that
5 side ready first before you build a bridge. And it would
6 be done right. If you go and just slap a bridge in
7 there, people are going to be waiting too long to go over
8 there and come back over here.

9 You'll be saying take that new, nice new road
10 going down there to Wasilla. They got a nice fancy
11 bridge there, bypasses all the businesses. Everybody is
12 hollering, "Oh, come over here and buy me stuff." And if
13 you look at the distance on that bridge, it's the same
14 distance from Wasilla all the way to Point Mackenzie.
15 Thanks.

16 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much for your
17 comments. Okay. John Toppenberg. And I apologize in
18 advance if I mispronounce your name. You'll have the
19 opportunity to correct me later.

20 MR. TOPPENBERG: I'll do that right now.
21 Toppenberg is the last name.

22 MS. SLATONBARKER: If you can let us know if
23 it's a question or comment, that would help the team
24 start thinking. Thanks.

25 MR. TOPPENBERG: My name is John Toppenberg.

1 T-O-P-P-E-N-B-E-R-G. And I would like to thank all of you
2 for the work you've done on this. I know it's been
3 difficult. And I spoke with Robin earlier about a
4 specific aspect of this that I would like to frame in the
5 form of several questions, that are on a specific aspect
6 of this proposal and that's relative to the impact on
7 beluga whales.

8 I would like to know what kind of research has
9 been done on the belugas' calving and potential calving
10 in that specific area or above the area. If information
11 is currently available -- scientific information on what
12 areas, in fact, the belugas do calve in, what impacts may
13 be involved there on the movement of the belugas up and
14 down the Arm, and what impact it would -- this project
15 would have on them. What kind of research has been done
16 on the sound tolerance that these belugas have and its
17 impact on their movements.

18 What impact will the proposed bridge have on
19 beluga prey and their presence in the proposed areas.
20 Are any speculative construction techniques being
21 considered to accommodate indigenous Kni k w i l d l i f e,
22 specifically belugas. Thank you.

23 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much for your
24 questions. I think I'd like to give the microphone to
25 Robin Reich.

1 MS. REIGH: I'm Robin Reigh. And I'm leading
2 up the national environment section of the EIS.

3 I'm helping to lead the belugas, the fish, the
4 shore bird, all of the critter information gathering work
5 that we're doing. I know that we talked earlier about
6 beluga whales and our study that we've been conducting.

7 If I can just go into a little bit of detail
8 into that. We've had beluga whale observers placed on
9 and observing throughout Knik Arm for about the past
10 year. They've been there during all daylight hours,
11 which is a lot of time right now, but not very much
12 during the winter -- in December. They have been on both
13 sides of Knik Arm. They've gathered a lot of information
14 on what's going on there.

15 Now, your question about what has been found on
16 calving in the Arm, we have not heard information that
17 leads us to believe that there is calving going on in the
18 Arm. There is some information that shows that there
19 have been calves that have been seen in the Arm, but I
20 have not heard about calving up there.

21 What we do know is that the whales are there
22 for parts of the year and they're not there for parts of
23 the year. They're there in high numbers in August and
24 September. They're there in very low numbers in the
25 winter months.

1 In the August/September period they seem to
2 follow a particular daily commute, let's say. They head
3 up the Arm with high tides, cruise up to -- all the way
4 up to the Eklutna and path there to the north of the
5 river.

6 During low tides they come down and tend to
7 gather at the mouth of Eagle River and sometimes near
8 Six-Mile Creek. So that's their daily commute when
9 they're in the Arm.

10 There's a lot of times during the year when
11 they just spend, coming in, maybe checking it out, maybe
12 a few individuals seen two whales a week maybe and then
13 they leave the Arm.

14 Regarding your question on what is movement of
15 calving in the area. The calves are with the adults at
16 some period. Again, I haven't seen more information
17 about calving happening in there.

18 Regarding sound tolerance. Not a lot is known
19 about sound and belugas. There's more known about
20 bowheads and sounds from the North Slope. Our research
21 at NOAA Fisheries has not been to determine what is
22 officially harassment of beluga whales.

23 What we have done to try to figure out what is
24 going on with sound is to measure pile driving along in
25 the -- when Port Mackenzie dock construction was going on

1 we measured sound as that was going on -- underwater
2 sound to try to get an idea of how sound travels
3 underwater in Knik Arm. So we have that information.
4 But there is really nothing documented worldwide that
5 shows what harassment to beluga whales -- how loud does
6 that have to be.

7 We are working closely with NOAA Fishery who
8 manages beluga whale to help us develop a project that
9 minimizes impacts on belugas. It's a concern, definitely
10 a concern, and KABATA and FHWA are really taking the
11 issue to heart.

12 Finally, what do we know about prey, beluga
13 prey? A lot now, not a lot a year ago. We've been doing
14 fishery studies for the past year, collecting -- and you
15 might have seen in the paper today our guys doing beach
16 staining. They've been doing beach staining, catching
17 different fish species, mainly salmon this time of year,
18 invertebrate species like shrimp. And we have seen --
19 we've seen a pattern of adult salmon, juvenile salmon.
20 We know a lot about that.

21 Now, correlating that with what belugas are
22 eating, it's kind of tough. Like I said they're there in
23 September -- most of the adult salmon are there in
24 September. It may be that they're feeding on marine
25 species.

1 So those are construction measures you asked
2 about. That's an issue we are examining worldwide. What
3 is done to exclude or to minimize impacts to beluga
4 whales from marine construction. That's a priority for
5 NOAA Fisheries. It's a priority for this project. And
6 we're gathering the information and looking how that can
7 be incorporated with the project.

8 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you, Robin. Okay.
9 Next up we have D.J. Blatchford. Are you here, D.J.?
10 Great. And then on deck we'll have Andre Camara.

11 MS. BLATCHFORD: My name is D.J. Blatchford,
12 born and bred in Alaska, generational, quite a few
13 generations. I'm a whale hunter. I've eaten quite a bit
14 of belugas. And any of the female hunters that you'll
15 ask, it's usually generational and it was survival. We
16 care about our belugas. NOAA has never managed them,
17 just to set the record straight. I would like to know
18 who you think knows the most about belugas in Alaska,
19 because from the scientists that I've talked to and
20 because I know Percy Blatchford personally. Him and his
21 son Joel grew up with the belugas.

22 Joel told the scientists how fast the currents
23 of the waters were, and how often his dad measured them.
24 However, they did not believe them, even though they are
25 the people of the land that have led through

1 generational, people of the waters.

2 And so they took their information and they
3 hired scientists at probably 160,000 a year to come out
4 and test. And it was the exact same measurements of
5 tides, the highs, the lows, the swiftness, which way they
6 turned, where the beluga went. And as far as the calving
7 is, are they orphans because you have not seen them out
8 there? Does that mean we have orphan whales, because
9 they're gray and they blend in with the water?

10 And when we went to eat the beluga we were very
11 thankful to get that because the meat lasted a long time.
12 But after the kill, when we brought them up we always cut
13 them open and looked at the organs. And any hunter,
14 caribou, deer, goat, it doesn't matter, even fishermen,
15 if you want to know what type of meat you are eating you
16 look at the organs, and if you don't, well that's your
17 own fault.

18 But if you open a beluga now and which we have
19 done with NOAA, you'll see an egg sack in the kidneys,
20 and it's not normal. And a lot of our whale hunters are
21 wondering why. And we are the only people in the area to
22 have stood down for five years without our food.

23 Now, you minus the amount of food that we were
24 minused each 2,600 families for five years. No one
25 reimbursed us. We had to find other foods.

1 So we'd appreciate it if you guys would show
2 the beluga hunters a little bit more respect because they
3 do know what they're talking about. They've been out
4 there. And it infuriates me when you belittle our people
5 like you have, because we want to work with you. We've
6 proven that. We prove that we were not the cause of the
7 decline of the belugas or the fish. We respect our food,
8 our water animals just as highly as the land animals.
9 And we're not the ones that came in with Tommy guns from
10 the Lower 48 and took out 3 and 400 caribou at a time, or
11 40 to 150 beluga at a time because there used to be huge
12 pods. When they went up the river you could count them
13 and walk across them years ago, which you can't now.
14 Thank you for your time.

15 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much for your
16 comments. Andre? And next on deck we have Trinnette
17 Bybee.

18 MR. CAMARA: Hello. My name is Andre Camara,
19 and that's A-N-D-R-E, C-A-M-A-R-A. I'm here to speak on
20 behalf of Alaska Center for the Environment. And I want
21 to thank you for the opportunity to give comments this
22 evening.

23 The Center was founded in 1971 by Alaskans.
24 They're Alaska's largest citizen's group working for the
25 sensible stewardship of Alaska's natural environment.

1 While we do support all of the sustainable that we can
2 possibly do to provide good jobs for all Alaskans well
3 into the future, I do have many concerns about this
4 bridge.

5 The proposed bridge would connect Anchorage to
6 hundreds of square miles of unpopulated wetlands to the
7 north, which raises the concern that will promote sprawl.

8 This is really contrary to Anchorage's
9 comprehensive plan based on smart growth principles that
10 aspire to make Anchorage the kind of place that matches
11 the splendor of our setting.

12 So I ask, how will this proposed bridge impact
13 the Anchorage comprehensive plan, which calls for
14 containing growth inside the Bowl and not spreading out
15 farther?

16 It will take away population and business from
17 Anchorage at a time when voters recently showed their
18 desire to invest in downtown. The Mat-Su Valley, the
19 Borough already struggling with growth on roads, and in
20 schools, is experiencing a rapid population boom, one of
21 the fastest in the nation.

22 So it makes more sense to use our existing
23 infrastructure of railroad tracks to put in commuter rail
24 that would ease traffic congestion on the Glenn Highway.
25 This could be done for a fraction of the money that would

1 be required to build this bridge. I think we really need
2 to look at more sensible solutions to solving commuting
3 and air quality concerns.

4 So we urge you to add the proposed congestion
5 relief nonbridge alternative in the draft EIS. And this
6 alternative includes instituting regular car ferry
7 service transit to Point Mackenzie, investing in
8 commuter rail between the Mat-Su and Anchorage, providing
9 car pools, and van pool incentives for travel from the
10 Mat-Su Valley to Anchorage, and expanding transit
11 services in Anchorage.

12 This four component alternative will meet the
13 needs of the Knik Arm project, potentially at a lower
14 cost, while still stimulating economic development and
15 allowing for population growth.

16 Additionally, this alternative will minimize
17 the adverse effects of sprawl development, helps downtown
18 businesses which rely on pedestrian traffic and will
19 provide construction and operational jobs for Alaskans.

20 Thank you.

21 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much. Okay.
22 Trinnette? And you're going to correct my
23 mispronunciation, and then Betsy Goll, you're on deck.

24 MS. BYBEE: You did great. My first name is
25 Trinnette, T-R-I-N-N-E-T-T-E, last name is, Bybee,

1 B-Y-B-E-E. Thank you for the opportunity to ask
2 questions. It's great.

3 I've been reading through the literature of --
4 that has been handed out tonight, and also looking at the
5 comments and opinions from those who have expressed their
6 concerns. And, also, when I've personally engaged in
7 conversation with individuals about this project, about
8 the bridge, a recurring theme that seems to come up again
9 and again is the cost of the project.

10 So my question is, is that we know we have this
11 for 400 to \$600 million, you know -- what's been given to
12 us. When will there be a more detailed configuration
13 cost analysis of this project to where the citizens can
14 get a better idea where to facilitate these funds --
15 where they're going to be going to.

16 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thanks very much for your
17 question. I think Edrie would like to handle that
18 question.

19 MS. VINSON: Before we have a preferred
20 alternative I don't think you can tell what it's going to
21 cost. The alternatives or the corridors we're looking at
22 now have a wide variety of costs associated with them.
23 And it's just not reasonable for us to put a date or a
24 deadline because we need to know first what a preferred
25 alternative would be.

1 MS. SLATONBARKER: And then once the reasonable
2 alternatives are identified, the information will be --
3 cost information will be in the EIS. So I hope that
4 answers the question.

5 Okay. Betsy Goll. And then next on deck we
6 have Lorna Knaus.

7 MS. GOLL: Hi, I'm Betsy Goll. That's
8 B-E-T-S-Y, G-O-L-L. I live on Government Hill. I was
9 born in Anchorage, so I've lived here most of my life.

10 First of all, I wanted to invite all of you to
11 our community celebration this weekend. I put these
12 fliers out back. Government Hill is the oldest
13 neighborhood in Anchorage. We turn 90 this summer.

14 There's so many historic properties on
15 Government Hill. You'll find many of the residents
16 living there have been working in the downtown area, for
17 Alaska Railroad, other corporations and companies here in
18 Anchorage for many, many years.

19 My neighbor, in fact, Edith Fleming, talks of
20 the time she moved to Government Hill in 1948 when she
21 would drive to Chugiak on a gravel road to go pick up her
22 plants for her garden. She still plants that garden
23 every summer. She still drives to Chugiak. Of course,
24 she goes on the highway. Progress is inevitable, but I
25 think that Anchorage can do it right. I think that we

1 can learn from mistakes that we have made in other cities
2 outside of Alaska, which sprawled. We need to live up
3 the Anchorage 2020 or comprehensive plan. We need to
4 make livable communities here in Anchorage so we don't
5 have to spend money that we don't have on projects like
6 this bridge, which we really don't need. I would like to
7 see from you more analysis on the traffic demands. Also,
8 I'd like to know who would pay 10 or \$15 one way each
9 time to drive across the Knik Arm Bridge from an area of
10 the Mat-Su Valley, which is as far as I can tell when I
11 walk my dog every day out into the Nightingale Park, it
12 really doesn't look like people are living out there. So
13 to drive from Wasilla all the way on that dirt road or
14 whatever you have on that side, I think it would probably
15 take about the same amount of time as it would be just to
16 drive on the existing roadway. So I'd ask that you
17 investigate that a little more.

18 As a resident of Government Hill, I'd ask that
19 you remove the Government Hill alternatives from your
20 study. As I said, Government Hill is the most historic
21 neighborhood in Anchorage. Many of us living there enjoy
22 the solitude, the historic values of the community that
23 we have in place. And we really don't want our
24 neighborhood to be gutted by a bridge that doesn't make
25 cents and that is C-E-N-T-S.

1 So I'd also ask that you reinvestigate in your
2 EIS the no-build alternative. I think this is, as I said
3 earlier, that Anchorage has an opportunity to do it
4 right. We need to learn from the mistakes that cities
5 have made in the Lower 48 and avoid sprawl by promoting
6 things like commuter rail, like car pool incentives that
7 are public transportation, so that we don't need to
8 again, create sprawl to build bridges like the Knik Arm
9 Bridge, which really don't make cents with a "C", so we
10 can protect communities like Government Hill. So thank
11 you very much.

12 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you for your comments.
13 Generally in your comments on specific -- more
14 information will be provided in the EIS.

15 Okay. Bill -- oh, no, Lorna Knaus. I already
16 had that started. I don't want to skip over you again,
17 and then Bill Bredesen you're on next.

18 MS. KNAUS: Yes, my name is spelled L-O-R-N-A,
19 last name, K-N-A-U-S. I'm the one that started foreign
20 trade zone here where 4,000 people have gone to work. I
21 do look ahead. And I do it for the people.

22 And I believe the young lady that just spoke
23 has the right idea of looking ahead. There is
24 alternative directions and more economical and more
25 readily available for the expansion of Anchorage as it is

1 right now. Kenai is five times larger than the city of
2 Anchorage, and they have paved road, power and telephone
3 right up to the park at the mouth of Turnagain Arm. And
4 Soldotna has all paved road, power and telephone already
5 in. They have schools, libraries, hospitals already in
6 larger than they need because they did look ahead.

7 If we put in a subway from the Anchorage
8 Airport to the Dimond Center, from the Dimond Center to
9 the Kenai Marine Port, from the Kenai Marine Port to the
10 Kenai Airport, to the Kenai Airport to the city of
11 Soldotna, we could do this within five years and it would
12 be with freight and/or people. And they already have a
13 dock built down there for international trade by sea.
14 Their airport only needs another 300 feet expansion and
15 it will be equal to ours.

16 This is the most logical, the most financially
17 logical and it will help Anchorage expand because the
18 Panama Canal is going to close. And the only solution
19 for distribution in and out of the United States is to
20 come up through the northwest passage and go over the top
21 of Canada to New York. And that will make New York and
22 Japan over 7,500 miles closer than using the Panama
23 Canal. And the Panama Canal is going to close for two
24 reasons, one is drought, and the other is it has to be
25 deepened and widened, and it's going to take them 20

1 years to take care of that.

2 Drought is in progress right now. It takes
3 over 300,000 gallons of water every time a ship exits the
4 canal. And if it doesn't rain, that freshwater lake
5 doesn't come back up.

6 We need to look at the expansion of population
7 here at the top of the world. We have communication
8 here, technology that nobody else has at the top of the
9 world. We are going to expand, and we need to have the
10 facilities. And we cannot afford to build a home, or
11 even get a loan from a bank, because the banks know that
12 the taxes on the development of the infrastructure over
13 in the wilderness is going to be greater per month than
14 to pay back the bank for new home construction.

15 We have to use our heads. And if we don't,
16 then the people who are doing this and need to put the
17 money in their pocket for their own reasons, may be
18 back-billed for what they are doing to us instead of for
19 us.

20 Sure, the Mat Valley will grow, but they need
21 to grow ahead of time. Thank you.

22 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much. Okay.
23 Bill, are you on your way? Great. And Kevin Williams.
24 Looks like a question mark, so I'll go back to you in a
25 minute. You can be on deck.

1 MR. BREDESEN: Good evening. I'm Bill
2 Bredesen, and it's spelled B-R-E-D-E-S-E-N. And I guess
3 I would direct my comments to just one aspect of the
4 question of build or no build. And that is the future
5 cost of energy here in Anchorage.

6 As I look around the world I look at China, I
7 look at India. And that's two billion people that are
8 growing rapidly. China is 24 percent per year, and every
9 one of them wants to drive a car, which means that
10 there's going to be a tremendous competition for energy
11 and gasoline, et cetera, et cetera.

12 And I think that the matrix -- decision matrix
13 that we're going to have in the future is not going to be
14 the size of your house or where you live, it's going to
15 be how close are you to work, how close are you to
16 shopping.

17 You only have to go to Europe to see what's
18 going on over there. And they've been fighting the cost
19 of energy for a long time. I was in Amsterdam last year.
20 And I saw what we call parking ramps where there were
21 10,000 bicycles per level. It was incredible. It was
22 brand new. I couldn't believe it.

23 But I think as we look at this, we need to look
24 at the cost of energy. And I believe we're going to be
25 looking at 5 and \$6 a gallon oil. And I think we're

1 probably going to be looking at somewhere down the road.

2 And I'll tell you how serious that idea has
3 developed. I just went to Boston to pick up a car I
4 bought on the Internet and it's a used. It's a Passat
5 with a turbo diesel engine with a five speed in it. And
6 I want to tell you, I drove from Boston to Anchorage,
7 6,000 miles and I averaged 50 miles to a gallon. I've
8 been in town here for almost a months. I've seen the
9 gasoline station once.

10 It's incredible, but we have to begin thinking
11 about energy. I believe the train is going to have a new
12 importance in our life, so I'll end my comments with
13 that.

14 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much. Kevin
15 Williams. Looks like a question mark.

16 MR. WILLIAMS: Yeah, I'm not speaking.

17 MS. SLATONBARKER: Pass. Okay. Fine. And
18 then Bob French. Are you available? Great. If you
19 could make your way up here and then Susan DiPetro,
20 you're on deck.

21 MR. FRENCH: Thanks. My name is Bob French.
22 And that's spelled B-O-B, F-R-E-N-C-H. I appreciate the
23 work that HDR provides and KABATA have done to
24 incorporate the new alternative routes for the Anchorage
25 side of the Knik Arm Bridge. I hope that my previous

1 comments on the purpose and needs statement as well as my
2 questions on the cost will be answered by the draft EIS.

3 I think that there are several key questions
4 that will make or break this bridge. Does it make
5 financial sense, or are there other less expensive
6 alternatives to the bridge that could solve our traffic
7 problems and the need for future growth?

8 I urge careful study of the nonbridge
9 alternatives. The cost of the bridge has been estimated
10 as being equal to everyone in Alaska giving up their
11 Permanent Fund check for one year.

12 The Knik Arm Bridge will not significantly
13 affect the commuting time from Palmer. And it will only
14 really benefit the Point Mackenzie land that will be
15 developed.

16 Is it really worth a public gift of 600 million
17 to a billion or more to those private developers of that
18 land? The connections on the east side of the bridge
19 have to be incorporated into the proposed traffic
20 solutions that are currently being planned. Dumping 20
21 to 30 or 40,000 vehicles a day onto the A-C Couplet
22 without upgrading those roads will destroy the
23 revitalization that is happening in downtown.

24 All over downtown Fairview south edition, you
25 see old junky buildings being torn down and replaced with

1 new ones. I really fear that the need to get into the
2 A-C Couplet and putting a freeway in through the center
3 of downtown is just going to destroy that.

4 I'm also glad that the alternative routes
5 across Elmendorf have been added. I understand that
6 there's a lot of work remaining to figure out what is
7 going to happen for those different alternatives.

8 I believe the Boniface route seems to me to be
9 one that can be best integrated into the traffic
10 improvements that are being planned, including the very
11 important freeway to freeway connection.

12 The connection on the Mat-Su side I think is
13 even grayer right now. I thought it was kind of
14 interesting that it was gray on the maps over there.

15 The bridge does need to actually connect to
16 some kind of an existing infrastructure. And to connect
17 onto a lane and a half dirt road just doesn't serve the
18 needs of the state, or the needs of the Mat-Su and the
19 community.

20 Another consideration is what needed highway --
21 federal highway funds may not happen because all of the
22 available funding is being siphoned off into Anchorage --
23 I'm sorry -- siphoned off into the bridge.

24 We have many traffic problems in Anchorage if
25 you just ask any commuter. We need to solve those

1 existing problems. And if the federal money is siphoned
2 up, it is important that the public be allowed to make
3 those kind of decisions on where we spend that money.

4 If this bridge is going to be built, it needs to
5 be done right. If the bridge is as critical to the
6 future needs and growth of this state as its proponents
7 say, it needs to be planned and built to solve our
8 anticipated problems and not cause them. Thanks.

9 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thanks, Bob. Okay.
10 Susanne, you can come up and then Allan Tesche, you can
11 be on deck.

12 MS. DIPIETRO: Hi. My name is Susanne
13 DiPietro, D-I-P-I-E-T-R-O. I'm a resident of Government
14 Hill and as a person who's been interested following talk
15 about the Knik Arm Bridge for years and years and years.
16 And I'm just looking at this blue sheet, "Knik Arm
17 Crossing Local and State Planning Supports a Knik Arm
18 Crossing," and listening to Kevin's comments about his
19 suggestion that somehow the impedance from this bridge is
20 coming from the people of Mat-Su and Anchorage and not
21 from elsewhere. And I guess with respect to him, I
22 couldn't disagree more and I've been following this for a
23 number of years.

24 And I'm just going to say this. It's well
25 known that we have a very powerful, very influential and

1 very efficient congressional representative who has said
2 publicly and privately that he would like to have this
3 project built. And you have to know that and take that
4 into account to understand the context in which these
5 planning documents were made. When a person who is
6 influential says publicly and privately that this is
7 something that he would like to have built, then
8 people -- the local people would be silly to ignore it.

9 And so you've cited a number of different
10 studies here or plans here that talk about the Knik Arm
11 Crossing or include language about the Knik Arm Crossing.
12 I think it would be completely wrong out of context to
13 suggest that that language was included because we just
14 dreamed it up, the people of Anchorage or the people on
15 the team just dreamed it up as a great idea. It's just
16 the opposite.

17 It's been something that's been talked about
18 that we've known that we have really very little control
19 over the decision to build this bridge or not build this
20 bridge will not be made in Anchorage. It will not be
21 made in Mat-Su. It will be made at the federal level.
22 And we have a very limited control over that. And
23 knowing that we just -- it would be silly not to at least
24 mention it in these documents.

25 And I'm just going to point one out, that I

1 have personal experience with the Anchorage 2020 plan.
2 There's kind of an implication here in your description
3 in this blue document that the bridge somehow fits in
4 with the 2020 plan. Actually, that's completely wrong.
5 It's a complete misstatement and misunderstanding of the
6 comprehensive plan.

7 We talked about the option. In other words,
8 one of the options for dealing with our population
9 growth, we talked about the option of just saying, "Okay.
10 Let's just let it go to Valley." And we specifically
11 rejected that option. Nobody wanted that. We decided
12 that we wanted to try to do redevelopment in Anchorage to
13 deal with that population growth.

14 So to suggest somehow that this bridge would be
15 consistent with this plan, I mean, I've got to really
16 make a strong protest of that. That's a complete
17 mischaracterization of the plan and the people who were
18 there will tell you.

19 I do appreciate your expansion of the scoping
20 process to include the alternative routes. We in
21 Government Hill, obviously, are not so crazy about those
22 bluff options because, although you're kind of looking at
23 what we do above the bluff or below the bluff, to us it's
24 really all the same thing because when you get off the
25 bluff you're still coming through our neighborhoods, and

1 that's just not acceptable to us especially given the
2 weak purpose or need for this bridge.

3 I'd also like to really encourage you to take a
4 serious look at the nonbridge alternatives, which is I
5 understand is an alternative of coming in maybe a little
6 bit later in the scoping process than you would have
7 liked. Although, I'll just make a comment that if this
8 whole project wasn't so accelerated we probably wouldn't
9 be so rushed for time.

10 We really need to take a real hard look at
11 studying those alternatives. And I'm envisioning a
12 commuter rail to the Valley with espresso on board and
13 covered parking where you can park your car and then get
14 on the train and get off the train and get on the shuttle
15 and go to work. I mean, I think that's attractive and
16 it's worth looking at again. Thanks.

17 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much for your
18 comments, Susanne. And you did an excellent job
19 respectfully. That is certainly something that we
20 appreciate here and thank you very much.

21 Next -- I lost my place. Allan Tesche. Thank
22 you.

23 MR. TESCHE: Thank you very much. My name is
24 Allan Tesche. It's A-L-L-A-N, last name Tesche,
25 T-E-S-C-H-E. I have several comments. I'm a member of

1 the^ to have Anchorage Assembly just elected to my third
2 term. I represent the Assembly district in which this
3 bridge may be built, and that's the North Anchorage
4 District.

5 I wrote the legislation that set up the
6 regional transportation planning organization. I sat for
7 about four years as one of its founding members
8 representing Anchorage. I was there when a number of
9 decisions were made by the commission and I do speak with
10 personal knowledge.

11 I do however, speak solely as an individual. I
12 don't represent the commission in this proceeding. And I
13 don't represent the Anchorage Assembly. If I use the
14 word "we" it's only because my memory is that I had many
15 discussions with other people. And I would like to put
16 some of the comments made by Kevin in proper context.
17 And I agree very much with the comments made by Susanne
18 Di Pietro.

19 When the regional transportation planning
20 organization was set up, it was set up with the
21 recognition by Anchorage and Mat-Su, that there were a
22 number of large projects and potential transportation
23 impacts that Southcentral Alaska face.

24 The number one project that we face is, of
25 course, the Knik Arm Crossing. The impetus for this

1 crossing came from the Alaska Legislature and the federal
2 government through our congressional delegation. The
3 most important event was the passage of the KABATA
4 legislation and formation of the group and the impetus
5 permanent congressional delegation.

6 The transportation planning organization was
7 not formed as an advocacy group for any particular
8 project, but rather to recognize that these projects
9 will have a big impact on Southcentral Alaska.

10 So to the extent that Kevin's remarks would
11 suggest that the impetus for the bridge comes from the
12 regional transportation organization, that is certainly
13 what I remember as a founder and initial participant in
14 the proceedings of the group.

15 As we looked at this project it became
16 abundantly clear to us that the decisions on whether or
17 not to build this bridge are not going to be made in
18 Alaska. They are going to be made in Washington D.C.
19 These are decisions made by other people way above local
20 government. And we might as well address that, and
21 address it honestly and deal with the impacts as best we
22 can, rather than address the decision itself that is
23 going to be made by other people.

24 So to that and several principles, it became
25 very important in our deliberations. First, that the

1 Knik Arm Crossing has to be seen as a larger part of the
2 transportation network.

3 I remember a fascinating lecture given to us by
4 Pat Gambell of the Alaska Railroad, showing how this
5 massive network will fit together. We need the
6 participation of everybody involved, the railroad, the
7 cities, the regional governments.

8 We invited KABATA to actually send a
9 representative to sit on the group. We were told that
10 they did not want to participate in our organization.
11 That was a source of disappointment.

12 Secondly, the bridge has tremendous financial
13 impact. We had to look at that well beyond just a port
14 to port construction. So with these in mind, the intent
15 of the group that I formed, was to address the impacts
16 and not to become or try to become the group that says
17 whether or not we're going to build this bridge. So with
18 that if there are any questions I'll be happy to answer
19 those. Thank you very much.

20 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much for you
21 comments, your well-timed sequence of comments there.

22 Okay. Now, next on the list we have Thomas
23 Pease, and then on deck we have Dave Shaftel.

24 MR. PEASE: Good evening. My name is Thomas
25 Pease, T-H-O-M-A-S and Pease is like the vegetable with

1 an "E" on the end.

2 First, I would like to thank the people in
3 front of me for listening to concerns and comments from
4 the previous public hearing. I'm glad to see that
5 additional alternatives are now on the map.

6 In addressing those, I would prefer your
7 Boniface or Muldoon connection. I think it would have
8 less impact on private property owners, on neighborhoods,
9 around downtown, as well as on private industries.

10 I think echoing other comments here tonight I
11 would like to additionally like to see non bridge
12 alternatives explored, including ferry and commuter rail.
13 I think also that this organization needs to take into
14 consideration more seriously the proposal to put in the
15 Fairview Corridor at approximately the same cost as this
16 bridge.

17 That proposal would address some of the same
18 issues that KABATA is claiming the bridge would address,
19 including moving thousands and thousands of commuters as
20 well as truck traffic northbound out of Anchorage.

21 Also, I would like to clarify one thing. I
22 think there's been a lot of talk about Government Hill.
23 I am a resident of Government Hill. But Government Hill
24 seems to be getting credit as well as a lot of attention
25 for other alternatives outside the neighborhood. And I

1 think that we can't lose sight of the fact that it's not
2 just Government Hill that we impact by some of those
3 alternatives that appeared on the map in April. It's
4 also the tank farm, the Port of Anchorage, downtown, the
5 Anchorage museum, the railroad. Some of the biggest
6 economic engines in this city will be impacted by that
7 bridge. So it's not just a neighborhood issue.

8 Another issue that came up, estimated cost, 400
9 to \$600 million. That's been the figure that's been
10 tossed around for the last couple of years. I know that
11 the local utility recently had to resubmit our RFPs three
12 times for tower -- transmission power for the
13 construction project. And that was because the cost of
14 steel went up astronomically. It went up so fast and
15 went up so high that they had to rewrite the proposal
16 three different times. I understand the concrete has
17 gone up equally fast in price. And a bridge is primarily
18 steel and concrete.

19 I've heard figures as high as 35 percent
20 increases in a matter of months. So I would ask that
21 KABATA rework its estimate to reflect the true costs of a
22 bridge, so that the public has accurate and honest
23 figures to work with. Thanks.

24 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thanks very much, Thomas.
25 Dave Shaftel, are you ready?

1 MR. SHAFTEL: I'm here, but I don't have
2 anythi ng.

3 MS. SLATONBARKER: Okay. Troy Maul den or
4 Maul den.

5 MR. MAULDEN: Was I on deck or was I up?

6 MS. SLATONBARKER: You are up. I'll announce
7 who's on deck. Warren Smallwood is on deck.

8 MR. MAULDEN: Hi. My name is Troy Maul den,
9 M-A-U-L-D-E-N. I'm a corporate communit y council
10 president for midtown, a local politician. I haven't got
11 elected but I'm working on that.

12 I'm a strong supporter for the Knik Arm
13 Crossing. My family is part owner of the Settler's Bay
14 Golf Course. I am a strong supporter though of also
15 taki ng neighborhood concerns into considerati on when this
16 project is being done. Government Hill has a lot of good
17 i ssues on why it should be focused out of the
18 nei ghborhood. And I was born and raised here in
19 Anchorage and I would probably have to agree with that.

20 One of my main concerns of this project is
21 that I've seen it. The design is going to be one lane
22 each way. Basically, over time and time again I think
23 we've learned in Anchorage that usually doesn't work
24 because five years later the extra lanes get built. So I
25 would like to get it done in one shot at one time.

1 My other major concern is I haven't seen any
2 plans of any safety or emergency situation. If there was
3 an automobile wreck or commercial wreck that came off the
4 side of the bridge and went into the Inlet, what kind of
5 plan would there be for a rescue. I know the Anchorage
6 Airport. Thank God we've never had a commercial ever
7 gone down, but that their plan is they try to reach that
8 plane in 20 minutes. I don't think too many people have
9 much of a chance because most of the small aircraft I've
10 seen go down in the Inlet you never find them -- the
11 plane or the people.

12 So if that could be addressed, I would really
13 appreciate it. And thank you for the time and thank you
14 for this opportunity.

15 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much. And
16 then next on deck we have Stephanie Kesler.

17 MR. SMALLWOOD: Good evening. My name is
18 Warren J. Smallwood, Sr. That's S-M-A-L-L-W-O-O-D. I
19 spoke last time about the bridge. And I wore my New
20 Orleans hat just to let the people know in Alaska that
21 environmental in Louisiana was considered and it hasn't
22 had any impact on the environmental down there and they
23 built down there bridges and those type of things with
24 the same type of land mass that we have here in Alaska.

25 But what I would like to say, first of all, is

1 that it seems like those that who are against this
2 project is making more of a noise than those that are for
3 the project. And I'd just like to say that the squeaky
4 wheel always gets the most grease. And so those that are
5 for the project I just hope them to have more enthusiasm
6 about building this project than those that are against
7 it.

8 Second of all, I had spoke last time because I
9 haven't heard anything about the things that I had
10 brought up last time, was about the Mat-Su side, that
11 seems like they're going to be a grab-all type, which is
12 going on now type of situation because of the Inlet over
13 there. And I would like to see a plan layout
14 infrastructure of roads, boulevards, streets, those type
15 of things, squared off where you can build without
16 having all the dead ends like they have here in
17 Anchorage. And I think at least somebody would have some
18 deadends in Anchorage, but we didn't really plan this
19 city. Let's plan to cross Mat-Su Borough where you can
20 travel from end of the place or the other. And you can't
21 build in every spot, and you can't own every spot that
22 you have over there.

23 Third is that last time I had laid out a sort
24 of a plan where you could travel from one end of the -- I
25 should say the area where you are building at or the

1 bridge on this side of town, you could build like on the
2 corridor of the Turnagain Arm and Knik Arm, you follow
3 the pathway of these two waterways and you can build
4 there, where if you were to pencil this in, the
5 engineers, if you will pencil this in like I have, you
6 pencil this in, and you will see that you have different
7 distributaries where you can feed them into the streets
8 that we have into Anchorage and you wouldn't be
9 bottlenecked in certain areas.

10 Let me say something about military bases. If
11 military bases will be the only exit for this project,
12 once military bases close down, you won't have any more
13 travel through a military base. A military base can
14 close down in a heartbeat. And things will come to a
15 screeching halt.

16 And second of all, if you try to go out the
17 Boniface gate, that is a chore by itself because now
18 you're going to feed back into the Glenn Highway.

19 Last time I was up here I said you can go all
20 the way to the North Eagle River exit, and also to the
21 south to the weigh bridge. If we would build a road all
22 the way around the outlet of the Knik and Turnagain Arm,
23 that will certainly serve the purpose of the distributing
24 of the traffic from one end of town to the other. Thank
25 you very much.

1 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you for your comments.
2 We're hearing a lot of great comments tonight. It sounds
3 to me like most of what we're hearing are comments. I'd
4 like to sort of ask the other folks who come up if you
5 have a question to make sure you let us know because I
6 don't want to miss any questions that are in there.

7 MR. SMALLWOOD: Can I get an answer to some of
8 those questions, though?

9 MS. SLATONBARKER: Sure.

10 MR. SMALLWOOD: One of the questions is did you
11 consider that. And what about the Mat-Su area, have they
12 considered that also -- answers to those questions.

13 MS. SLATONBARKER: Yeah. The question being
14 what's the consideration being done to plan for
15 infrastructure on the Mat-Su side, and how that relates
16 to this project?

17 MR. SMALLWOOD: Right. And also, have they
18 considered taking the route all the way around Alaska,
19 Turnagain Arm and Knik Arm? Have they considered that?
20 Have they pencilled that in to see whether that would
21 work? But I don't see it on none of their plans.

22 MS. SLATONBARKER: Right now that one is not
23 one that's pencilled out, but now that we've heard your
24 comment we will go back with the team and figure out what
25 we can do with that information.

1 So let me ask a question if there is someone on
2 the project team that would give a little bit of summary
3 of the planning work that's being done to accommodate
4 this project and how this ties in with the Mat-Su Borough
5 side?

6 MR. DOYLE: I'm a little dismayed that people
7 think we don't live in a free and democratic society.
8 It's a bit disturbing to me. And I guess that's your
9 free opinion, but a bit disturbing to me.

10 A lot of comments we heard about people's
11 remembrances and recollection. I would encourage you to
12 read the facts. You want to read the facts and the
13 resolution. You want to read the Anchorage 2020 plan.
14 We certainly have it in the library. You know, you're
15 free to come by and read the facts of the project and
16 make your own opinion on the facts.

17 MS. SLATONBARKER: And you are free to
18 respectfully agree or disagree. That's fine, too.

19 MR. DOYLE: These are my opinions. That's just
20 pretty amazing.

21 Anyway, infrastructure, we've heard a lot of
22 comments about infrastructure in the Mat-Su. It's a dirt
23 road, yes -- dirt road now. The Mat-Su Borough has the
24 money. They've got \$6 million earmarked to pave the
25 majority of Point Mackenzie Road. They're trying to get

1 additional funding to complete that. Their Burma Road
2 upgrade improvement is in the works. They just had an RP
3 in the paper a couple of weeks ago or last week, to get
4 going on that. I think they've got designs for major
5 improvements on that. They've acquired about 80 percent
6 of the right of way to make the improvement up to the
7 Parks Highway. So there are some improvements planned
8 for that.

9 This calendar year the Mat-Su Borough adopted
10 a rail study and highway study that went from the Port
11 Mackenzie district up to the Parks Highway. And they
12 routed the preferred highway around as the Point
13 Mackenzie Road/Burma Road corridor. That's some of the
14 improvements going on now.

15 They also adopted a rail corridor that's a new
16 alignment corridor, that takes from Port Mackenzie, goes
17 on the new alignment west of Red Shirt Lake and up to the
18 Parks Highway.

19 It's an 800-foot right of way. It's forward
20 looking. It's primarily in their priority of a rail
21 corridor to the Port. It's also is wide enough -- it's
22 800 foot wide and can accommodate a four-lane highway
23 with limited access. It can accommodate utilities.

24 So you can say, "Well, you're building the road
25 out there now." It's a dirt road. There are plans for

1 the Mat-Su side for this infrastructure. The bridge as
2 soon as it can be built is 2010. So by then certainly,
3 Point Mackenzie would be paved, Burma Road and premise
4 would be in place. There would be some activity. We've
5 had the Kennicott Ferry going in 2007. There is going to
6 be a development at the Port Mackenzie district. There
7 will be more residential development. I don't know if
8 you've ridden down Knik Goose Bay Road lately and
9 Settler's Bay. It's pretty amazing what's going on out
10 there. There's shopping centers, there's signs going up,
11 and developments, and duplexes lining the road. It's
12 amazing, and that's without the bridge. There is
13 development right there today. It's north of the Port
14 Mackenzie district, but it's not vacant land out there.
15 And the real estate prices are pretty amazing, too, if
16 you haven't looked out there lately. I think you will be
17 pretty surprised.

18 There's a lot of development going on out
19 there. The infrastructure is happening on its own.
20 It's -- there's development, there's pavement. There's
21 coordination that needs to be done about the effect of
22 the bridge and who's liable for making some of these
23 other improvements if the bridge exhilarates the need to
24 make some additional transportation infrastructure
25 improvements.

1 We're working closely with the Mat-Su Borough
2 and DOT to see if some of the statewide arterial
3 improvements to be made and some reprioritization of
4 funding to make these arterial connections into the Parks
5 Highway, make it more of a regional project. Make it
6 conducive for movement of freight and people -- freight
7 goods up to Fairbanks and Interior Alaska.

8 So there are plans that are in the works.
9 Again, this is a project through 2030. And you need to
10 look in the context of that of the population growth and
11 other things that are going to occur with the 2020 LRTP
12 that AMATS just finished and is going to send it off.
13 And the Mat-Su Borough is soon going to adopt their 2025
14 long-range transportation plan network.

15 So you really need to put Knik in, plug it into
16 what that looks like, and what's that going to look like.
17 That's the future infrastructure, and there are plans for
18 that.

19 MS. SLATONBARKER: And, Kevin, I think John is
20 sitting on the edge of his seat. So can I -- so thank
21 you very much. I hope that answered that question. And
22 I've got two mics on since we'll move on to Stephanie
23 Kesler. Stephanie, as you're moving up I just wanted
24 reiterate and thank you folks for giving us these
25 comments. This feedback is exactly what we need to hear

1 right now. So keep it coming. And, Stephanie, let me
2 interrupt you one more time before you begin. Chris
3 Kosinski, you're on deck.

4 MS. KESLER: Hello. My name is Stephanie
5 Kesler. And I'm president of the Government Hill
6 Community Council. And Stephanie, S-T-E-P-H-A-N-I-E and
7 Kesler is spelled K-E-S-L-E-R.

8 First of all, I'd like to thank the Federal
9 Highway Administration and Edrie for conducting the
10 second round of the scoping meeting. I'm sure there
11 are -- we would all like to be outside enjoying the
12 weather instead of tucked away down here in the bowels of
13 the Egan Center.

14 I would also like to thank the military for
15 their openness and willingness to look at alternatives.
16 Their active participation has completely changed the
17 tenor of this project. There are now real alternative of
18 substance within the paradigm of the bridge approach.

19 As a result, these military alternatives make a
20 great deal more sense than the originally narrow scope.
21 The new military alternatives leverage Anchorage's
22 existing transportation infrastructure, and they
23 preserve -- they preserve Anchorage's community
24 cohesiveness.

25 Poor Kevin. I think you're feeling a little

1 picked on. And I'm going to poke you here a little more.
2 Kevin made several reference to Government Hill and our
3 subdivision. And while it is true that we're extremely
4 active, focused and vocal, I think it's important to know
5 that the alternatives, the new alternatives are not all
6 about Government Hill. The bluff alternative both above
7 and below severely impact the Port, tank farm operators,
8 shippers, other industrial entities and the railroad.

9 Any of the A-C Couplets alternatives are
10 profoundly detrimental to downtown Anchorage. Can any of
11 us say with a straight face, that dumping the Knik Arm
12 traffic onto the A-C Couplet is a good idea in an example
13 of good planning? I don't think we can. And this
14 illustrates why the new alternatives, the new military
15 alternatives are so important.

16 As I said, or as I stated during the previous
17 scoping meeting, if we're going to build this bridge
18 let's do it right. Let's not destroy Anchorage's oldest
19 neighborhood and turn the A-C Couplet into a clogged
20 nightmare that completely derails downtown Anchorage's
21 new and exciting renaissance. Thank you.

22 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much. Chris
23 Kosiński? Are you here? And as you make your way up we
24 have another Allan Tesche here? Maybe someone told her
25 to put a checkmark by this name.

1 MR. TESCHE: I'm sure there's some people
2 behind this and told her to put a check mark by this
3 name.

4 MS. SLATONBARKER: There can only be one.
5 Okay.

6 MR. KOSINSKI: Thank you. Chris Kosinski,
7 C-H-R-I-S, K-O-S-I-N-S-K-I. I guess one question --
8 clarification on this is I read somewhere or heard that
9 drive time between Anchorage and Wasilla with the
10 proposed will be saving only five minutes. And is that
11 the best reason to spend \$600 million?

12 Along the West Coast of the United States in
13 the Lower 48, bridges have not been built until ferry
14 service dictated there was a need to transport additional
15 people. For example, prior to the floating bridge across
16 Lake Washington, ferry service came before and
17 established a need for a bridge from Seattle to
18 (inaudible). In San Francisco, ferry service between
19 Sausalito and Marin County came before establishing the
20 Oakland Bay Bridge.

21 The spending of at least \$600 million
22 determined there is a need for a bridge on Mackenzie's
23 area from Anchorage does not make sense. The project
24 should not be driven by the "we will build it and they
25 will come" philosophy.

1 Allowing the proposed passenger ferry service
2 between Anchorage and Mat-Su proves to the people of
3 Southcentral Alaska that a bridge is necessary. Allowing
4 year-round ferry traffic tests to take place both with an
5 ice-clogged Inlet and without. Regardless, vehicle
6 transportation corridors must be established before the
7 bridge is built. Let the ferry riders determine whether
8 there is indeed a need for a bridge. And actually a
9 tunnel may make more sense.

10 Not wanting to discredit our federal
11 representatives but still wanting to take the grand
12 (inaudible), let's spend \$600 million to fix existing
13 deficiencies within the Anchorage Bowl and Mat-Sure
14 Borough road systems.

15 Anchorage has a problem -- has problem traffic
16 locations, congestion leading to and away from Tudor and
17 Lake Otis, Gambell Street, Ingra Street and the New
18 Seward Highway each require an expansion plan and the
19 Mat-Su is no different.

20 A bridge to Point Mackenzie has been talked
21 about for many, many years. We've already spent a lot of
22 money and we're just only a little closer to making an
23 educated decision.

24 Let's follow a process, an educated process and
25 use a dependable ferry service to test the waters and

1 define a user need if it exists. Thank you.

2 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you for your comments.
3 Okay. We have Janel Walton signed up to speak. Janel,
4 are you here? And next up is Les Gara has a maybe. So
5 you can think about it.

6 MS. WALTON: Hi. My name is Janel Walton.
7 It's J-A-N-E-L, W-A-L-T-O-N. I am a resident of
8 Government Hill. I just bought my first home actually in
9 Government Hill less than a year ago. I happen to live
10 right at the Erickson Street corridor and the Degan
11 Street corridor. So I'm very seriously affected by the
12 choices that this body makes.

13 This first house that I bought I bought with my
14 sister. It's a duplex and there we live. We each have
15 two bathrooms and 1,000 square feet. I have three
16 children. She has two. And we don't have enough room,
17 but we love it there. And we couldn't afford to live
18 anywhere else. And even if you gave us the amount of
19 money that our house was worth, with the rising costs of
20 housing in Anchorage, we'll never be able to buy a house
21 right now with the money that you will give us.

22 It will seriously affect our lives, and it will
23 affect the lives of our children because another one of
24 the corridors would take out their school. And my
25 biggest question is: Why in the world would the three

1 choices that were first coming out for this bridge be to
2 take out peoples' homes and their school? Why not avoid
3 those areas? I don't understand why that was the first
4 choice that was made from all of these people that you
5 couldn't come up with a plan to go around. You know,
6 there's so many lives that are going to be affected by
7 that. And that's what my priority is. I need to know
8 why something other than our homes wasn't the first
9 choice?

10 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much for that
11 comment with a question of how this process started and
12 how the first line was drawn on the map. And let's see,
13 Kevin?

14 MR. DOYLE: I can tell you the history real
15 quick.

16 MS. SLATONBARKER: And I want to preface it,
17 too, that the difficult part -- the part of this process
18 where theory doesn't match with people's experiences and
19 homes. These processes start with fat lines on maps.
20 And I just want to make a clarification to help my team
21 members. No team member goes in and says here put it
22 down. There is a level in this business where you put
23 fat lines in and you get input and sense. And your input
24 and sense is very important to help figure out what is
25 reasonable. I say that as a preface. So there's no need

1 to -- I'll just be quiet and let Kevin speak.

2 MR. DOYLE: The project goes back a long time,
3 and the last comprehensive was done by DOT in 1984. And
4 you look at what were some of the needs then and what are
5 some of the needs now. And if you kind of look at some
6 of the plans we've identified and pieced together what
7 are some of the needs as articulated by the local
8 governmental entities. These hopefully adopted four
9 plans, comprehensive plans, land-use plan and
10 transportation plans. And you try to say from a
11 transportation function -- and I don't mean to be
12 insensitive to the environment or the people or whatever,
13 but for transportation functionality, downtown is a
14 significant employment center. Midtown is a significant
15 employment center.

16 You have a majority, 52 percent of the Mat-Su
17 labor force commuting to Anchorage as an employment
18 center. They're coming in on the Glenn Highway. The top
19 two employment centers are midtown and downtown. That's
20 where they're going. It's a destination base of where
21 they're trying to get to. So there's some logic there as
22 a destination place.

23 You look at some of the difficulties that have
24 occurred. The Municipality is trying to fix the Ship
25 Creek and Port of Anchorage area for a couple of decades.

1 They're trying to get those trucks out of downtown.
2 There's been studies, Port plans, Port of Anchorage
3 master plan, 1999 northern port of access -- northern
4 Port of Anchorage access study where they're trying to
5 get this truck routing out of Ship Creek, out of
6 Government Hill vicinity, out of downtown and get it on a
7 northerly access. They don't really necessarily support
8 the bridge maybe, but you get into the Glenn Highway, you
9 get it out of downtown, you get it out of that
10 congestion. Get it to their points northward where
11 they're trying to go.

12 So there was a transportation functionality
13 associated with the Ship Creek industrial area and the
14 Port of Anchorage. And those were some of the plans that
15 were there.

16 If you look at the amendment to the long-range
17 transportation plan, the director for the Port of
18 Anchorage made the recommendation to add the study to the
19 feasibility of Knik Arm into an element to the LRTP so
20 the study could be done. And some of the citations from
21 that request you can see we've captured it for you and
22 it's itemization of less -- decades of how this project
23 progressed.

24 It talks about the needs of the Port, and these
25 area advantages, and if we could get this Port out to the

1 north and have better movement. So there's a point of
2 center issue, there's getting some of that truck traffic
3 better circulation out of there.

4 Some of the historic studies -- DOT did an
5 update study in 2003 and they were looking at the
6 Ingra/Gambell connection. And when we started with
7 KABATA here recently, we weren't sure if the highway to
8 highway connection was going to survive their LRTP. And
9 the Ingra/Gambell wasn't a logical connection without the
10 future network of highway to highway.

11 And in looking at the network of what existed
12 there, A-C Couplet, they'd have access capacity on it.
13 It was a potential connection point.

14 So if you look at the plans and transportation
15 functionality, and try to see what arterial and the A-C
16 Couplet is on the national highway system. And that's
17 important to the State DOT. It's not important to
18 municipalities, but for the national highway system
19 that's for a federal highway and that's the State
20 jurisdiction. That's where they try to put their monies.
21 They don't put it on a mobile street. They don't put it
22 on downtown street. They put into the national highway
23 system.

24 And if you look at some of the other industrial
25 lands and what does A-C feed? It feeds midtown. And it

1 feeds all the industrial end down on C Street. So there
2 was some logic when they first looked, and let's see if
3 there is how much reserve -- excess reserve is there for
4 federal demand and we put it there. But it wasn't
5 shortsided. We don't think we're going to have 30,000
6 vehicles on the bridge when we open it day one. There
7 was intentions to work with AMATS as we are, the
8 Municipality of Anchorage to look at having an additional
9 connection ultimately to the Ingra/Gambell. And what you
10 see under adoption, hopefully shortly has been in the
11 five public workshops over the last couple of months.
12 There's an extension of Ingra/Gambell on a viaduct into
13 the Ship Creek Valley, across Ship Creek, down to
14 Whitley. That's likely going to survive and be adopted
15 as part of the 2025 network.

16 So we thought, well, that makes sense to make
17 some future connections there. And you need to have two
18 major arterial viaducts. And then with a highway to
19 highway connection as major arterial international
20 highway system transportation roadways.

21 So that made sense from a transportation
22 network functionality. And there were some thoughts,
23 yeah, Government Hill is some concern. But, you know,
24 can we be as noninvasive as possible? Can we be
25 sensitive? Can we do a cut and cover tunnel? Well,

1 nobody wants to do that, but we put a proposal out there.
2 Is that attemptable? It's temporary disruption when
3 you're going through there and maybe it's part of that
4 relocation for one or two structures. But can you go
5 through and have this tunnel and recreate that housing
6 and it will be underneath.

7 Yeah, there's prospects, there's traffic
8 impacts, and noise and air. But there's an intent to be
9 totally sensitive analyses at it to look at it as a
10 proposal.

11 And just as I remember you were led to believe
12 and rightfully so real quickly --

13 MS. SLATONBARKER: I'm going to put a
14 three-minute time limit.

15 MR. DOYLE: That military lands -- we didn't
16 think especially with 9-11 that we could get onto
17 military lands. And we didn't do that because, we just
18 thought we don't want to bother talking to them. There
19 were talks with the military. We still don't know that
20 we can get on military lands. There is pretty new stuff.
21 And they still haven't said we could do that. But they
22 certainly have been gracious to say we'll look at it for
23 you.

24 But if you look as recently as 1999, the Port
25 of Anchorage tried to get on military land. And there's

1 a letter, no, you can't. And that was before 9-11, so
2 we're concerned, you know. It was a legitimate concern.
3 We didn't think based on this historic document and 9-11
4 that that was an option. So that's where this funding
5 came from. That's where we come into that area. There's
6 no other way around if you don't go through military
7 lands. That's where the bridge is planned. That's where
8 the need is also.

9 MS. SLATONBARKER: I think that it starts with
10 transportation functionality and other planning
11 documents. And then we move to this process. Great.
12 Thank you. We have other folks on the list and we've got
13 about nine other people that have signed in just so you
14 guys have a status update of how long folks we have in
15 the cue here. Nine more. Nine more folks. Liz Gara you
16 are up and then on deck we have Melinda Grant.

17 MR. GARA: Thank you very much. Les Gara,
18 G-A-R-A. And I represent among the neighborhoods that I
19 represent I represent downtown and I represent Fairview
20 and I represent Government Hill.

21 If this project is done poorly those are the
22 three neighborhoods that are going to be damaged the
23 most. If this project is done smartly, every house in
24 those neighborhoods and in the city will be protected.

25 So from a logical perspective you have two

1 choices. One choice that doesn't destroy any homes or
2 any neighborhoods and that's to go through Elmendorf and
3 Fort Rich. I'm glad you're starting to consider that.
4 And you know the route to be able to go through Elmendorf
5 and Fort Rich is to work with our congressional
6 delegation.

7 As you know, not only do I agree that that's
8 the proper route, but now Senator Murkowski also agrees
9 that's the proper route. So you have allies.

10 And our request is not that you ask the
11 military whether you can access their land, is that you
12 work with our congressional delegation to make sure that
13 you can use that land.

14 You know, there's an old saying, "first you do
15 no harm." Doctors are pretty good at that, government is
16 not that good at that. And faced with the alternatives,
17 the A-C Couplet alternative that some of you have
18 proposed severely affects downtown. We're trying to
19 extend development in downtown east of A Street. And
20 this will hurt that effort very much.

21 It severely impacts Government Hill. And it
22 potentially it impacts Fairview if you decide to go
23 through the new Fairview expressway.

24 Those are expensive projects. Those are
25 projects that are damaging. And you wouldn't have to do

1 any of that, and you wouldn't have to pardon anything if
2 you do the Elmendorf and Fort Rich access.

3 Early on there was a consideration that maybe
4 this would compromise military security, but the truth
5 is, the railroad already goes through Elmendorf. The
6 railroad already goes through Fort Rich. And a road
7 access could be designed similarly so no national
8 security -- off the record, there are military people who
9 agree with that.

10 So I'm going to ask that you work very closely
11 with the congressional delegation to get the access that
12 makes the most sense. I'm not going to address whether
13 or not you should build the bridge. I'm going to let
14 other people address that. But if you're going to build
15 it, I want you to build it in a way that doesn't damage
16 neighborhoods. That doesn't damage Government Hill,
17 Fairview or downtown.

18 Now, there was mentioned some planning
19 documents support this project. That might be so, but
20 there's not a single planning document and the 2020
21 document doesn't require that this bridge go through
22 downtown. It doesn't require that it go through
23 Government Hill, and it doesn't require that it go
24 through Fairview.

25 If you look at the 2020 planning document as a

1 matter of fact, it requires that we expand downtown.
2 That would militate against a downtown access route.

3 It requires that we revitalize Fairview. That
4 would militate against a Fairview access route. It
5 requires that we protect it against our neighborhoods.
6 And that would militate against a route that damages
7 Government Hill.

8 So all those routes lead to a proposal that
9 you're considering now, which is go across Elmendorf, go
10 across Fort Rich. It makes sense. It's done by the
11 railroad already. That's the way to do it if you're
12 going to get around oppositions. It's the way to do it
13 if you're going to protect neighborhoods. I hope you do
14 that. I hope you seriously keep following those goals.
15 I'm glad you folks have talked to my office about this.
16 I'm glad you've spoken to Senator Murkowski's office
17 about this.

18 Just never credit a Republican who are pushing
19 that proposal. That doesn't happen too often. And I
20 hope you keep pushing that proposal. Thank you.

21 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thanks very much. Melinda?
22 And then next we have Berkley Hold maybe.

23 MS. GANT: Hi. My name is Melinda Gant,
24 G-A-N-T. I'm a resident of Government Hill. I've been up
25 there for almost eight years now. Prior to that I lived

1 in Bootleggers and had a home there, and made a decision
2 to sell my home and go to the Government Hill area and
3 haven't regretted that choice eight years ago. It's a
4 wonderful community.

5 I also chose it because of the school at the
6 time when I was doing a little of preplanning for my
7 children. And all I can say again, is reiterate that the
8 community in itself is just wonderful, wonderful,
9 wonderful.

10 I would like to talk about -- a little about
11 some things and probably just do some comments. On the
12 very first note that I -- I made a note to myself, is in
13 regards to Kevin saying that we asked for this and it was
14 not a governmental whim.

15 I probably feel very differently about this. I
16 think the way it started was a governmental whim. I
17 think that there has been talk and talk and talk for
18 years now about the bridge. But really nobody took it
19 seriously. I think primarily because of the cost, and
20 the cost is still a factor now.

21 I would also like to express some concern about
22 the initial focus about the above and below bluff and
23 that was the primary focus for the route to be
24 considered.

25 I understand from the military when they showed

1 up to the council meetings and the special sessions, that
2 they very clearly said that they had never been
3 approached. I had some concerns about that. It almost
4 seemed that there was a movement to just primarily focus
5 going through those routes versus considering going
6 through the military and possibly using the Boniface
7 Parkway.

8 I wanted to expressly say that I do support the
9 Boniface Parkway. It seems that it would least impact
10 the residents, the schools, and more importantly on the
11 downtown core.

12 I am very supportive of the downtown core. One
13 note I noticed on here on this blue sheet here, and I
14 wish I could remember the year, but I think it was in '97
15 or '99, Kennelson & Associates did a study through the
16 Municipality of Anchorage. And they personally stated
17 that the A-C Street Couplet in five years would be
18 overused if certain things were not changed. Those
19 changes have not happened. And now the recommendations
20 for the above and below bluff point out again, going back
21 to pushing more congestion through the A-C Street
22 Couplet. And in my opinion, would destroy the downtown
23 community that Marvin Marston way back when had so in --
24 very hard tried to build up that community again.

25 The downtown core had changed and I think we've

1 made steps in improving it. And I would hate to see it
2 change because of this bridge going through that area.
3 Thank you.

4 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you for those comments
5 and for that information on that '97 report as well.

6 Berkeley. I think it's Ole or Tod. You're
7 going to correct me right now. That's great. And then
8 Guy Kerner on deck.

9 MR. IDE: Yeah. Berkeley Ide, I-D-E, and
10 Berkeley is just like Berkeley, California.

11 Primarily I'm in favor of the bridge. The main
12 thing is, the Anchorage Port extension, of course, which
13 we're all familiar with, and the Knik Crossing is
14 necessary for economic growth for Southcentral Alaska.

15 Now, the port requires an efficient access
16 route to move the goods across its docks. Trailer truck
17 traffic must be routed away from downtown Anchorage to
18 keep a viable downtown to reduce the chance of a
19 potentially dangerous accident involving a fuel tank
20 tractor-trailer.

21 Now, our Port is considered a strategic port by
22 the military. And it is where approximately 85 percent
23 of all freight was relied upon -- to sustain our way of
24 life arrives in the state.

25 We need a state report access group because

1 Port heavy truck traffic must have a direct link to
2 either the Seward and Gambell, and the Glenn Highway.
3 And those that do not have to navigate through the
4 downtown traffic.

5 Now, back in the '80s, '79, '80, when I was a
6 lobbyist in Juneau we discussed this at that time.

7 One of the main things stopping us that time
8 was coming across from the Ingra/Gambell viaduct, coming
9 under the bluff there in Government Hill under Degan
10 Street into the port -- the trailer staging areas. This
11 is the most direct route that would have the least impact
12 on the city. It would take the heavy traffic away from
13 downtown.

14 Now tying this in with the Knik Crossing would
15 serve two purposes. It would keep a viable downtown. It
16 would direct the traffic coming across the Knik Crossing
17 into the downtown area where it's needed, so the people
18 come in would be working down there.

19 It would stimulate the railroad yard, the
20 area -- industrial area. It would stimulate the Port
21 expansion. Once the bridge is across with the Mat-Su
22 industrial development area coming in, then the tank farm
23 could be moved across there to where it should be. It
24 would eliminate that benzine problem we have on
25 Government Hill. Since I do live on Government Hill, I

1 have lived there since 1977. I have lived in that whole
2 area since 1971. So that I'm very familiar with the
3 Port.

4 One of the big things, of course, people are
5 saying is (inaudible). Not in my backyard. Well,
6 everything that has ever been done has impacted someone.
7 When they first put up the Golden Gate Bridge it was
8 going nowhere. Everybody complained about it. Today you
9 wouldn't believe it. You have to realize this, Alaska
10 has been shortchanged when it came to building
11 infrastructure. We're a younger state, only since '59.
12 The last state before that came in 1912, Arizona. So the
13 Lower 48 states have been chanced to have this
14 infrastructure built by the federal government. We have
15 not. We've been ignored. It's time to catch up.

16 I say take every dollar we can get and put it
17 into the infrastructure we need up here. By going across
18 the Knik Arm we're going to create an economic
19 development in the Mat-Su and in the Port.

20 We're going to create more jobs. It will give
21 people something to do to work and to live up here. This
22 is what we need. This is why I'm in favor of it.

23 And the best way to do it, of course, is coming
24 across the Gambell/Ingra viaduct going across under Degan
25 Street whether you bore or not. It's probably going to

1 have to be dug out as a ditch, because the land in there
2 you cannot bore through it. It will collapse on it. You
3 have to do something like (inaudible) and (inaudible).
4 Thank you very much.

5 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much. Guy
6 Kerner.

7 MR. KERNER: Yes.

8 MS. SLATONBARKER: Is that closer this time?
9 And then Lois Epstein on deck.

10 MR. KERNER: Hello, everyone. Sorry if I'm not
11 that organized. Actually I just found out about this
12 about two hours before I got off work. So I kind of --
13 that does seem like this process has gone by very
14 quickly.

15 I was born and raised in Fairbanks. And I have
16 a lot of (inaudible) at the North Star Borough. And in
17 case you didn't notice are out the wazoo. (Inaudible)
18 they do anything in the North Star Borough.

19 As for the bridge, I can honestly say I don't
20 necessarily oppose it. But I think I echo everyone
21 else's comments, which is, if you're going to build such
22 a large piece of infrastructure and it's going to be so
23 expensive to build, and it's going to take so much of our
24 state's resources to build it, then please build it
25 correctly.

1 One thing I guess criticisms about your plans
2 about the bridge is, I don't see any pedestrian access of
3 any kind. The gentleman up here mentioned the Golden
4 Gate Bridge. I have been there. And I have actually
5 walked across the bridge. Actually, I have a fear of
6 heights, so actually being up on the bridge can be a
7 little nerve-racking. You can walk on it. It's a great
8 tourist attraction.

9 Anchorage is the center of the state. You
10 know, growing up in Fairbanks there are lots of nicknames
11 for Anchorage, but it is the center of the state. It's
12 the economic center and is a symbol for the state.

13 The bridge that from what I've seen so far that
14 you're trying to build is entirely geared towards the
15 automobile. There's nothing for pedestrians. I don't
16 see any planning in the bridge for mass transit, a bus
17 lane. Do you add light rail across this infrastructure?
18 I don't know.

19 Do you have plans as you build this bridge for
20 its footings? Is there going to be a secondary bridge
21 built as the traffic flow increases? I don't see if you
22 guys have addressed that issue at all.

23 Also growing up in Alaska, I've also seen many,
24 many very expensive bridges in the middle of nowhere. I
25 went dip netting growing up in the Copper River. And

1 there's a beautiful bridge down on the Copper River. And
2 you can get to McCarthy going across it, but it's an old
3 dirt road. So, please don't make that mistake in this
4 case. I know it's a different situation than others.

5 It does seem to me -- and I am not a political
6 fishing hondo. I don't follow politics that closely.
7 I make comments on it with my friends quite a bit. But
8 there does seem to be a kind of lack of planning of this
9 bridge as far as how it fits into everything else in
10 Anchorage.

11 In Anchorage in the paper over the past year
12 I've seen the Glenn/Fairview corridor developments, the
13 museum expansion, the convention center.

14 At one point there was an article in the
15 newspaper about the railroad developing commuter rail,
16 but that's really just a connect to skyways and
17 breezeways.

18 How does all this traffic that you plug with it
19 downtown comport these other plans? Government Hill
20 itself actually had a redevelopment plan -- that at least
21 I heard about -- about redeveloping the core of
22 Government Hill to make it more friendly with this huge
23 three-story building where you shop on the level and
24 residential above.

25 I just wish that you look at this bridge as not

1 the way to funnel more motor vehicles into this state,
2 but think of the human element. I live here in Anchorage
3 because Government Hill -- I do live on Government Hill
4 as well. But I chose that neighborhood because of the
5 quality of life, so I ask you to protect that. Thank
6 you.

7 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you for your comments.
8 Thanks for the things to consider now and then the next
9 day of the process as well. Lois Epstein? And then the
10 next person can be Greg Garcia.

11 MS. EPSTEIN: Thanks very much for holding this
12 hearing. My name Lois Epstein, L-o-i-s, E-p-s-t-e-i-n.
13 And I'm a licensed engineer with Cook Inlet Keeper, which
14 is a watershed protection organization.

15 I'm one of the few people here today maybe
16 other than those up front that actually attended and
17 spoke at yesterday's hearing in Wasilla. And so I will
18 not repeat myself. And I do have a number of follow-up
19 questions. They may seem a little disgruntled to those
20 who weren't there yesterday, but I would like to have
21 three questions answered.

22 And for those of you who haven't seen it, I
23 also was one of the signatories to a letter from seven
24 consumer transportation and conservation organizations
25 asking that a congested relief non bridge alternative

1 which we heard spoken about, which includes four
2 different components, not just a ferry, not just a
3 commuter rail, that all those components together would
4 be an alternative that would meet we believe, the purpose
5 and need. And that should be included in the draft of
6 the environmental impact statement.

7 MS. EPSTEIN: My first question is about
8 resolution 1-03, which I haven't mentioned and waived.
9 And I'll waive it here. It actually has two pages and
10 here's the second page.

11 That state supports for the Knik Arm Crossing,
12 both regional, and transportation planning organization.

13 The second page, which is the actual funding
14 request says that the priority is for the Knik Arm
15 Crossing with rail. So I spoke with Dowl Engineers and
16 Consultants. They said that actual characterization of
17 support is for the crossing with rail.

18 And yesterday we heard a lot of comments that
19 we need the crossing to also have rail. I didn't hear
20 that so much today. But recognize that will be more
21 costly, but the endorsement was for a rail crossing. So
22 I wanted to clarify that. So, Kevin, I just wanted you
23 to comment on that.

24 Second, I was wondering whether the travel plan
25 study will perform a sensitive analysis of the vehicle

1 numbers with respect to toll rates? And I'm not sure if
2 you're the right person to respond to that would be.

3 And then my third question, it relates to the
4 revised purpose and need, that we were able to get copies
5 of yesterday and is in the back of the room today.

6 I did spend some time today to give some
7 feedback to the Federal Highway Administration with that
8 document. And I wanted to raise a question about the
9 language, including vehicular access as part of the
10 purpose and need, because I'm wondering whether that
11 makes too narrow -- too much on cars.

12 As I read -- and this is a green piece of
13 paper -- the purpose and need. I'm wondering why the
14 purpose is not cut off much earlier. So I would say the
15 purpose of the Knik Arm Crossing project is to further
16 the development of transportation systems in the upper
17 Cook Inlet region to meet the following needs one, two
18 three.

19 Instead, it gives a lot of specific stuff about
20 vehicular access, the Port Mackenzie district
21 successor type because it's extraneous and limits the
22 alternatives that would meet the actual purpose. So I
23 would like to ask a question on that. Thank you.

24 MS. SLATONBARKER: So we have three questions
25 on the table. One -- and a question about do we indeed

1 know that -- the second page talks about the endorsement
2 of Knik Arm Crossing with rail. And the question would
3 be: Where is the rail component and how is the team
4 handling that?

5 The second question regarding mode of travel
6 demands, or not are handled or provide information of --
7 related to tolls and toll costs.

8 MS. EPSTEIN: Sensitivity analysis. And on the
9 first question I actually am raising a question about
10 whether it's an accurate characterization to say that the
11 resolution supports the Knik Arm Crossing without a rail.

12 MS. SLATONBARKER: That might be something that
13 we have to look at and study in more detail. And then
14 the other part is the answer to the question about the
15 term vehicular in the purpose and need statement.

16 MS. EPSTEIN: Right. And that's also a comment
17 on my part about shortening the actual purpose.

18 MR. DOYLE: You're right. The intention with
19 the project even as you look at the DOT's update in 2003,
20 the fees and cost update study there was a look at -- a
21 hard look at the project with rail and with highway. And
22 should be a combined bridge or a separate bridge. And
23 there was some cost estimates that were prepared. As you
24 can imagine with rail there are substantial additional
25 costs with heavy rail and your heavy loads. And those --

1 your substructure and what it takes to build your
2 foundation to take those loads in a heavily loaded rail
3 car it's very -- many cars in length. It's a lot
4 different than a vehicular bridge itself.

5 There was, and there is still, a desire to have
6 this as a highway and a rail crossing. The funding
7 package we got -- is phase one is the highway. We've
8 been working very closely with the Alaska Railroad
9 Corporation. They are part of our IDT team. We worked
10 with them individually and they come to our monthly
11 meetings. And they have told us -- and we're trying to
12 put this thing together called this indirect
13 accumulative.

14 And what would be the effects we're trying to
15 create? What will the world look like in 2010, 2020,
16 2030, regarding the decision of not just the
17 transportation network, but what are the land uses and
18 what impacts might be pointed out for it in 2030. What
19 are the economic impacts. What if he inputs the
20 infrastructure. Is Ted Steven going to open a cargo
21 freight operation over on the ag lands over there?

22 We've done over 40 interviews to become an
23 economic work group. We're trying to put together what
24 is a reasonable -- what is a perceivable interactions out
25 there, and working with the rail so it's kind of a

1 twofold. I'll get to it.

2 So without development of the rail or the Port
3 Mackenzie's -- Alaska Railroad has told us it's not
4 economically feasible right now for them to have a rail
5 bridge over in Port Mackenzie.

6 The development of the industrial base over
7 there is not there yet. And so number one, the need for
8 them is not there yet. And number two, the funding we
9 don't have yet. But we are certainly studying the bridge
10 up geometrically and the approaches.

11 In fact, if you look at the Boniface corridor
12 you'll see a very wide band going from where it
13 intersects with the rail over to the bluff. And that's
14 to accommodate the spur line off their existing rail line
15 across Elmendorf Air Force Base to parallel the highway
16 bridge and the future expansion to run both a vehicular
17 and a rail bridge across Knik Arm.

18 So that is kind of like the future
19 transportation network of AMATS and the Mat-Su, and the
20 Willow connector. You can't build it all overnight, but
21 you can certainly plan for it. And you can set your
22 geometrics up. You can set your rights of way up, you
23 can set your land uses up and your infrastructure up, so
24 that these things can get accomplished and commented
25 upon.

1 So I guess to answer your question -- I don't
2 know if it does accurately, but rail is still in the
3 picture. It's just not part of phase one.

4 The railroad is working very closely with us.
5 They've given us a lot of good comments. And we expect
6 at this point they will be a multi-rail corridor
7 absolutely. And that has ramifications to the right of
8 way and the pier design, and the bridge design. And the
9 grades, the approach grades and studying that up for
10 them. I guess number two, your question on mode, you
11 asked if you made a sensitivity analysis of the traveling
12 plan model.

13 The first thing we do is go out and run the
14 travel plan unequated? What is it? And then that big
15 part of KABATA that this has to be a self-sustaining
16 bridge. They have to sell revenue bonds to help fund the
17 project. And those revenue bonds may affect our tolls.
18 And the tolls are going to have to pay for operational
19 maintenance costs. No one else is going to give them
20 operation maintenance costs.

21 So they have to do a strike a balance, right?
22 They have to look at a balance of travel demand and what
23 is the liability? And that's part of this cap. They've
24 kind of gone to the bond experts and they said, you know,
25 based on what we're talking here, how much could we

1 finance? And the answers -- preliminary answers that
2 come back probably capping it about 600 million. If you
3 go much higher than that we probably can't, you know,
4 finance a project unless you come up with some other type
5 of financing. And right now we don't see that. You have
6 \$200 million earmark. We don't know if we're even going
7 to get that. And that may cause the project some dismay
8 also.

9 Yeah, so there will be a very intensive toll
10 sensitivity. And that's very near and dear to the
11 financial part of KABATA as to where do you balance it --
12 travel demand and the cost of the toll.

13 And do you want ridership, but you've got to
14 pay for it -- the bonds. And you've got to pay for the
15 operation of maintenance. It's hard to do that, you
16 know, because we don't know what the cost is. We've got
17 to know the cost of the bridges. We've got to know what
18 the travel demand is in the parameter.

19 MS. SLATONBARKER: Excuse me. Some folks might
20 not know the term "travel demands."

21 MR. DOYLE: How much can you track through
22 that. If you charge 20 bucks, you're probably not going
23 to get too many people there. If you charge a buck you
24 will get a lot more riders.

25 MS. SLATONBARKER: And the term track meaning.

1 MR. DOYLE: A path or column.

2 MS. SLATONBARKER: A computer program that
3 information is put in and then you get a sense of the
4 picture of the world and what the world looks like,
5 number of cars in the future.

6 MR. DOYLE: I guess vehicular access, is that
7 too restrictive? I think in the purpose statement it's
8 correct. If it was in the needs statement, I think it
9 would be more of a concern. The purpose has always
10 been -- the project has been a vehicular bridge. There's
11 no trying to hide from that.

12 As what it's been, it was 1984, that's what the
13 RPO always talked about. It's a highway and a rail
14 bridge. We need vehicular access. If it's a regional
15 project it needs to be a vehicular bridge. But the needs
16 or what's important, those are the things that these
17 other modes try to meet.

18 And can other modes meet the needs that can
19 replace this purpose statement that we have to this --
20 the five vehicular bridge. But the needs are clean, the
21 needs that can be met by multiple options. It can be met
22 by other modes. It can be met by making an inquiry or
23 not, so that's the test.

24 It won't -- just because a ferry is a ferry it
25 doesn't mean it fails on a screening test because it

1 doesn't meet purpose to me. And you won't see that. It
2 will be a hard look at the needs. And it will have to do
3 with other things like travel demand, what are the needs
4 or -- what other kinds of financial feasibility they
5 should see some of these other parameters.

6 So it's not going to be one arrow that kills
7 something.

8 MS. SLATONBARKER: And you're talking about
9 purpose and need on the record. It sounds like there
10 could be more conversation about the intricacies with
11 that language.

12 MS. EPSTEIN: I want to make a quick comment of
13 responding to the resolution; 1-03.

14 MS. SLATONBARKER: Sure.

15 MS. EPSTEIN: You know, having heard your
16 answer, Kevin, I guess I'm still concerned that there is
17 a characterization of inanimately and bottom of support
18 for the bridge from the region when actually, the Port in
19 that resolution was for a bridge with rail because there
20 were big rail needs or big cargo.

21 MS. SLATONBARKER: Why don't we end right
22 there. Thanks very much for holding in there. We're
23 getting really good comments and it's taking some time,
24 and we really appreciate you being here. And Michelle
25 Wilber next in line.

1 MR. GARCIA: Thank you. My name is Greg
2 Garcia, G-A-R-C-I-A. I would like to comment on three
3 different aspects of this project. The first being who
4 pays, and who benefits. The second being the cultural
5 impact, and the third being what I see as a better use of
6 resources in this project.

7 The first idea about who pays, Alaska seems to
8 thrive on big projects. We always have to have these
9 massive things like the Point Mackenzie dairy project,
10 for example. But we like to do it on money from the
11 other 49 states.

12 People in Alaska like to spend a lot of time
13 whining about the government, and at the same time
14 bellying up to the government trough to get the public to
15 pay for things that we want to have here. And frankly,
16 it's embarrassing. Okay.

17 I'm old enough that I paid state income tax. I
18 worked and paid state income tax before the state
19 legislature foolishly got rid of it.

20 You know, we have an inability to maintain the
21 facilities that we now have, and now we're looking for
22 money to build something new.

23 I would like to suggest or propose if you go
24 forward with building this, that the property owners, the
25 large property owners and the developers who will benefit

1 most from this project actually pay for the project out
2 of their own pockets. In other words, real free
3 enterprise, not looking for the public to pay for some
4 engineering wet dream.

5 The cultural impact -- you know, I'm concerned
6 that this is going to expand the Wasilla commercial
7 strip. Where -- in Wasilla where the most appropriate
8 use of lake frontage land seems to be the loading dock of
9 a box store.

10 I lived in Wasilla prior to the construction of
11 the Parks Highway and witnessed the destruction of my
12 community by unregulated development. And we've had
13 20 years plus of perpetual highway expansion with flagmen
14 and 5-mile-an-hour zones all the time to expand this
15 four-lane nightmare.

16 So I'm concerned about the creation of a North
17 Anchorage sprawl. You know, we have developers who want
18 to develop large tracts of land there.

19 The third thing, a possible better use of these
20 resources. We need to get more traffic off the road,
21 rather than to accommodate more traffic. The United
22 States people of production have since 1971 worked world
23 oil production happening now, happening last year or this
24 year.

25 Someone mentioned \$5 a gallon gas. I imagine

1 by the end of the decade we might be looking at \$10 a
2 gallon gas. You'll see a lot of Hummers up on sauna
3 tubes may be used for apartment buildings or something
4 like that. I mean, I don't think people are going to be
5 driving many Hummers into the Valley anymore when it's
6 \$10 a gallon.

7 So we need to provide alternative
8 transportation to get these people into town where they
9 work. We need high-speed mass transit rail systems, for
10 example. And we need improved transportation
11 infrastructure in the Wasilla/Palmer area and in
12 Anchorage as well.

13 You know, that's -- rail proposals were made
14 back in the 1950s by people in the Valley. My father
15 commuted to Anchorage in the 1950s and, you know, I think
16 the time for that is now. Thank you.

17 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much, Greg.
18 Michelle Wilber, are you still with us? And then next up
19 Rich Sewell.

20 MS. WILBER: Good evening. My name is Michelle
21 Wilber. M-I-C-H-E-L-L-E, W-I-L-B-E-R. The Sierra
22 Club -- so if you're not familiar with it, the Sierra
23 Club is a conservation organization. So many of our
24 concerns with the proposed bridge project involved
25 adverse effects to wildlife, the globe of the whole

1 quality of life in Anchorage.

2 And I won't go into too much detail. Let me
3 cut to the chase. I will tell somewhat of a personal
4 narrative first. I am lucky enough to live in downtown
5 Anchorage (inaudible). And I also work in downtown
6 Anchorage. I'm able to take my toddler son to a
7 babysitting job, where my partner also works in downtown
8 Anchorage. We often shop in downtown Anchorage. We
9 often shop in downtown Anchorage. So we have this
10 wonderful quality of life where we mostly walk everywhere
11 we go.

12 As I walk around downtown, though, I do notice
13 that one person mentioned storefronts with, you know,
14 triple-layer apartment buildings on top. And I notice as
15 I walk around downtown Anchorage that it very much does
16 not resemble any European cities I've been in.

17 There does seem to be a lot of room for both
18 economic and population growth that does not involve
19 moving outwards. It involves sprawl. So I will -- you
20 know, the Sierra Club as well as myself are very
21 concerned with the impact of sprawl. And I do believe
22 that this bridge if built, will contribute to additional
23 sprawl.

24 I will cut to the chase, though. And I believe
25 these are pretty much exactly the points that were made

1 perhaps verbatim by Andre from the Alaska Center for the
2 Environment, but they bear repeating, so I will repeat
3 them.

4 Speaking for the Sierra Club, the Knik River
5 Sierra Club, we need to urge the Federal Highway
6 Administration add the proposed congestion relief
7 nonbridge package. The alternative for evaluation in the
8 draft EIS of the proposed congestion relief non bridge
9 package alternative, include regular car carrying transit
10 to Point Mackenzie, invest in a commuter rail between the
11 Mat-Su Valley and Anchorage, providing car pool and van
12 pools that offer incentives for travel from the Mat-Su
13 Valley and Anchorage, and expanding bus service, and
14 increasing streetcar transit in Anchorage.

15 This four-component alternative will meet the
16 needs of the Knik Arm Crossing project potentially at
17 lower costs, while still stimulating economic development
18 and allowing for population growth.

19 Additionally, this alternative will minimize
20 the adverse effects of sprawl development, help downtown
21 businesses which rely on pedestrian traffic, provide
22 construction and operational jobs for Alaskans, it does
23 degrade air quality not and protects the Cook Inlet
24 Alaskan beluga whale and the National Marine of Fisheries
25 species and the Cook Inlet salmon.

1 This alternative allows for cargo shipment
2 between Port Mackenzie and Anchorage via ship, relieve
3 commuting congestion in Alaskan population growth,
4 provides multiple transfer routes for emergencies and
5 other services, and addresses the need for mobility
6 within Anchorage.

7 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much. Rich
8 Sewell. Thanks for coming up and Scott Mueller.

9 MR. SEWELL: Good evening. My name is Rich
10 Sewell, S-E-W-E-L-L. I'm here to try the system tonight,
11 and I have two questions, and one comment.

12 The first question is: Is there a physical
13 impact analysis on the Anchorage tax base going to be
14 done as part of this study, that is, will it look at
15 physical impacts from business relocations out to the
16 Valley? And the second part of that is will it include
17 physical impacts from increased land inventory on the
18 Anchorage tax base?

19 The second question is: Is land use modeling
20 impact analysis going to be done as part of this? And
21 then, are these two types of analyses going to be done,
22 and if not, why not. And then the -- my final comment
23 would be recently the planning director for a community
24 development for the city of Bogota was here in Anchorage.
25 And we were up on the Turnagain -- Stuckagain Heights

1 looking down on the Bowl -- Anchorage Bowl. And Bogota
2 is about the size of Chicago. And she was looking down
3 on the Bowl and said, "This is really incredible. In
4 this amount of space, the city of Bogota about five
5 million people in it."

6 And so when we're thinking about putting a
7 bridge across the Inlet to open up land to relieve
8 congestion in Anchorage, it kind of struck her as
9 hilarious with just over a quarter of a million people
10 here. So that's the essential of the two questions that
11 I would like to have answered.

12 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thanks for those comments.

13 TEAM MEMBER: To answer your question, yes, we
14 will be looking at the physical impacts of the project to
15 the tax base, and to -- what was your other suggestion
16 there?

17 MR. SEWELL: And also land use modeling, that
18 is, what -- opening up this land, what actually is the
19 outlook. And this -- I used to be the municipal
20 economist in the planning department for the Municipality
21 of Anchorage, so I've actually scratched my head on this
22 very project quite a bit in the past.

23 TEAM MEMBER: We have a program to look at
24 population and economic growth both in Anchorage and the
25 Borough, to turn that into lands uses and place those

1 land uses on the ground and examine, you know, how this
2 project might shift the land demand, and then in turn how
3 that affects traffic.

4 So we have a great program to look at that and
5 model the effects of that. So that will all be covered
6 in the environmental impact statement. Okay. Thank you.

7 MS. SLATONBARKER: All right. Thank very much.
8 Okay. Scott Mueller. Thank you. And then on deck we
9 have Sidney Billings.

10 MR. MUELLER: Good evening. My name is Scott
11 Mueller, that's M-U-E-L-L-E-R. And I'm a strong
12 supporter of the Knik Arm Crossing. And I just want to
13 thank the HDR staff for their efforts for bringing this
14 to fruition.

15 I feel that you are taking a cautious in-depth
16 approach to this project and feel we can come to a result
17 allow the project to come to fruition.

18 Just to comment on some of the things I heard
19 tonight. The wildlife impact issues, one thing I've
20 personally seen up river from the Knik Arm Bridge during
21 high time -- numerous times -- pods of beluga whales. So
22 that bridge obviously has not affected the beluga
23 population on Knik. And I've never seen any dead ones
24 after low tide to simulate a loss of life due to that
25 bridge.

1 It kind of reminds me of the pipeline on the
2 North Slope. The caribou congregate around the pipelines
3 because it's an itching post. So there's no trees for
4 miles around so they -- it's turned out to be a good
5 thing for them.

6 Anyway, and I think that the people that have
7 vast generations of experience with the beluga population
8 would be a real enhancement for the research, especially
9 on what they're eating. Autopsies of that nature is kind
10 of like fishing when you find out what the fish are
11 eating so you can use that for a lure, so in that regard
12 to what they were saying I think it would be a real
13 valuable resource.

14 Anyway I just wanted to go on record, strong
15 support. Thank you very much.

16 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you. Sidney, are you
17 still in the room? I guess we missed Sidney, and
18 hopefully a comment sheet was taken home. How about Kim
19 Baughman.

20 MS. BAUGHMAN: Hi. My name is Kim Baughman.
21 Many of you know me by a different name, but that's
22 because of my radio persona. The first name is K-I-M,
23 the last name is B-A-U-G-H-M-A-N.

24 I had to be here tonight on a different
25 relation. And, so, I was listening a lot to the comments

1 and decided to make a few of my own. First of all, I
2 listened to some of our representatives talk about the
3 military, and it's nice to see that some of our military
4 is here listening to the comments.

5 I would imagine that the reason we have been
6 given permission -- not that I can speak for the
7 military -- but, I would imagine that the military is
8 interested in offering to work with us, work with you on
9 this project is because of two factors. One, the federal
10 level. We all agree, or least some of us are realizing
11 that this is being driven at federal level. It's not
12 being driven at the local level, which makes it far
13 easier for those people to influence the Department of
14 Defense and convince them that it would be a good idea to
15 run a road through their installation.

16 And my take on that is, yeah, certainly. That
17 means they have access right off the installation toward
18 Fort Wainwright. Okay. But if things escalate and the
19 Department of Defense sees the need to shut down the
20 road, you've got a bridge to nowhere because they're not
21 going to let you on their installation. 9-11, of course,
22 played a lot of factors in that. And I'm sure that the
23 Department of Defense would work with you.

24 As far as comments made by Les Gara regarding
25 the railroad, the railroad served the military. The

1 Department of Defense needed it to haul supplies and
2 other things. So the bridge and the road itself would
3 serve a purpose currently. We've got units now that are
4 rapid deploy units and travel directly onto a military
5 installation from another military installation, and an
6 access to a port is very important in their structure and
7 deployment. So those are my comments.

8 My questions and, of course, they can't be
9 answered yet because the engineers have not laid out
10 plans for a bridge or any other mode of transportation
11 across Knik Arm that is being considered.

12 I haven't heard or seen anything addressed
13 regarding the capability for a structure to withstand
14 earthquakes, and that includes a tunnel. And I haven't
15 heard or seen addressed anything that would talk about
16 shifting ice and the ice floes that go in and out of the
17 region. And until you have a design for the bridge I
18 doubt that you will be able to answer those questions,
19 but it's certainly something I would like to see in the
20 future.

21 If you are planning on building this bridge I
22 ask you to take a lesson from the City of Phoenix that
23 spent \$6 million of federal highway funding to build
24 their interchange on Interstate 10. And they have a
25 corridor all laid out, and then all of sudden, they found

1 Tabago Indian artifacts in that corridor and then closed
2 the corridor. They spent \$6 million to build the bridge.
3 They spent 30 million to take it apart 10 years later.

4 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you very much for you
5 comments. Is there anyone here tonight who would like to
6 give us some more comments? Come on up.

7 MR. MASSEY: My name is Justin Massey. I'm a
8 resident of Anchorage. My name is spelled J-U-S-T-I-N,
9 M-A-S-S-E-Y. Thank you all for the opportunity to comment
10 and for staying here this late. I'm sure as Stephanie
11 has related to you all that we would choose to be
12 somewhere else if we could.

13 I have four areas that I would like to touch
14 on, beluga whales, the range of alternatives, and then
15 EIS, the cost of each alternative, and finally indirect
16 impacts.

17 I first, in regard to beluga whales, would like
18 to agree with Mr. Mueller I think it's a terrific idea.
19 And I think it's the responsibility that the Highway
20 Administration owes to the indigenous community of Knik
21 Arm, requires you to consult with people like the
22 Blatchfords and their community about historical
23 information with respect to environmental status and
24 impacts on beluga whales, so we can get background
25 information to quickly form the decision about whether to

1 build any of the alternatives.

2 I would further suggest again that KABATA
3 gather and incorporate a longer range and more varied
4 impact studies or input from the protected resources
5 division of NOAA Fisheries.

6 I know I went on the boat trip with Robin in
7 the confidence that as you all are doing to proceeding in
8 good faith and is quite competent in doing an excellent
9 and setting up the studies that you have done. They are
10 fairly short term, however. The Protective Resources
11 Division and NOAA Fisheries has longer term data. This
12 is highly at-risk population. And it would behoove
13 KABATA to gather as much information and incorporate it
14 into EIS if they could.

15 The second topic I want to talk about is the
16 range of alternatives. I read in the paper just
17 yesterday, I believe, in response to the coalition of
18 public interest groups congestion relief nonbridge
19 alternative. There was a comment that it's a little bit
20 late in the game to be suggesting alternatives, although
21 I applaud you for the tone that welcomed those comments.

22 I would merely submit to you that now is
23 exactly the time to determine alternatives. You have
24 recently established a purpose and need. And as your
25 council will tell you, that defines what is a reasonable

1 range of alternatives. So now is the time to be
2 considering what alternatives the EIS will include.

3 The purpose and need incentive is to improve
4 vehicular access on the surface connectivity between the
5 Municipality of Anchorage and the Mat-Su at Port
6 Mackenzie.

7 Accepting that, which is fairly a dubious
8 proposition, because as I understand it now, Port
9 Mackenzie exists solely to export raw materials from the
10 state of Alaska, most of which come from the north.
11 Maybe a small fraction in the future would come from the
12 south requiring the shipper of those to ship all the way
13 around Knik Arm to Port Mackenzie doesn't seem to be the
14 need right now. I'm not sure what the future need is.
15 But let's just accept that Port Mackenzie district is a
16 key part of this.

17 The majority of the need is -- I will have to
18 submit my comments in another form.

19 MS. SLATONBARKER: No, that's fine. We had
20 ourselves structured tonight here to make sure everyone
21 has a turn, and since no one else is signed up, why don't
22 you finish your comments there. You were on Number 2.
23 So why don't we just extend.

24 MR. MASSEY: Okay. I will try to be as quick
25 as I can.

1 The majority of the need is for improved access
2 and surface connectivity. I support the alternative that
3 was submitted by the (inaudible). I would also suggest
4 that you could consider things like expanded or new
5 commuter bus service from the Valley, between the Valley
6 and Anchorage, car pool lanes on the Glenn Highway and
7 other alternatives or components that could be added as
8 part of a nonbridge alternative.

9 The third area that I wanted to discuss was the
10 cost of the bridge. There have been some response to an
11 earlier question regarding cost that's saying it couldn't
12 be estimated until KABATA had selected a temporary
13 alternative.

14 With due respect, this really doesn't -- it
15 falls short of the National Environmental Policy Act,
16 which is set up to inform the public when a decision has
17 been made that's a relative merit of the alternatives.

18 The public and decision maker is only allowed
19 to assess the cost of a single alternative, after it's
20 been selected as a preferred alternative, has denied them
21 the opportunity to weigh and develop the merits of the
22 cost and benefit merits of the other alternative against
23 each other and make an informed decision.

24 Finally, indirect impacts is the last area of
25 inquiry or last area of comment that I would like to

1 make. I am acutely concerned at the impacts that will
2 result on the west side of Knik Arm from this project.
3 The commercial, residential, and other development over
4 there is going to have significant impacts on the human
5 environment, on wetlands, water quality in Knik Arm, of
6 course related to the beluga whale and fish population,
7 on wildlife and all other aspects of the environment.

8 It is imperative that KABATA research and
9 discuss those impacts in detail in the EIS. Thank you
10 very much.

11 MS. SLATONBARKER: Thank you for your comments.
12 And I just wanted to make two points of clarification
13 on -- it would be FHWA who will be making a decision on
14 the preferred alternatives. And then another
15 clarification that EIS will have a range of alternatives
16 and cost will be included, will be -- detailed
17 information on costs will be for the range of
18 alternatives, so it won't be just on a single preferred
19 alternative.

20 And Edrie had another point that I might have
21 missed.

22 MS. VINSON: I think the end question about
23 cost had something to do with the cost of mitigation. So
24 that's something we would not know when we begin studying
25 alternatives.

1 MS. SLATONBARKER: That's a good appreciation
2 that there are -- cost is a of point of evaluation in the
3 EIS. We'll not know costs it appears for alternatives.
4 The questions earlier tonight merely seemed to be leaning
5 towards mitigation cost. What will it cost for the
6 details of project. We don't know the project details
7 right now. But when we have the information it will be
8 provided in the EIS. Am I on the mark? Okay. Is there
9 anyone else?

10 MR. LAVERTY: Good evening. My name is Paul
11 Laverty, L-A-V-E-R-T-Y. I have one comment and one
12 question. I guess the comment is, is I find it kind of
13 ironic if not disturbing that we're proposing a project
14 that has the potential, if not greatly disrupt -- for it
15 to destroy some of the oldest neighborhoods in Anchorage
16 in order to facilitate the transportation project over to
17 a chunk of land across the Knik Arm, that at this point
18 in time is very little populated, very little developed
19 and it doesn't have a development plan. So that's --
20 that bothers me.

21 And then I guess my one question is directed to
22 Edrie about the cost of the project. The Knik Arm Bridge
23 and Poll Authority has set a range of 400 to
24 \$600 million to this project. And that they felt that's
25 what they could afford to spend, and they set that a

1 couple of years ago.

2 And in looking at an article in the "Alaska
3 Journal of Congress" dated July 10th, up from above the
4 Knik Arm ferry project, the folks over in the Mat-Su
5 Borough have recently seen the project cost increase by
6 25 percent, and in a short period of time.

7 So I guess my question is: If there is this
8 sort of artificial sealing of \$600 million for the
9 overall project, and we've seen construction costs in
10 cement and steel go up dramatically in the past couple of
11 years, is that all of a sudden severely constrain the
12 alternatives in order to artificially fit into that nice
13 400, \$600 million box -- as far as an overall project
14 cost.

15 And if -- and then does that study necessarily
16 have the authority to say that even the Knik Arm Bridge
17 and Toll Authority says we've got to come up with 600, do
18 you folks have the authority to say, "Well, if you're
19 going to build an economically viable and ecologically
20 safe alternative that you've got to spend more than
21 \$600 million?"

22 MS. VINSON: I wish we could say that we had
23 more than 600 million to pay for it. I think you really
24 asked me a question that's a question for KABATA?

25 The 600 million has to do with what they

1 believe they'll be able to raise and what they will be
2 able to repay. So is there someone from KABAT?

3 MR. LAVERTY: I guess, more of my question is,
4 is under NEPA, if the project -- and we were to compile
5 all the regulations of NEPA -- costs more than
6 \$600 million, do you have the authority to say that,
7 Well, gee, we have to do something that doesn't fully
8 support NEPA, but meets this artificial upper limit of
9 \$600 million in order for the project to go through?

10 MS. VINSON: NEPA is not bound by that cost,
11 but neither is the decision because you could make any
12 decision you want. If there's no money to pay for it
13 you can't force anybody to build something according to
14 the decision.

15 MS. SLATONBARKER: So I guess maybe the
16 structure of the EIS is a document that provides
17 information on the alternative, the range of
18 alternatives, and the impact and the costs. And that's
19 an informational document that people use to make
20 decisions, and information in there will reflect the
21 alternatives.

22 And then the issue of the 400 to 600 million
23 is out here in another realm related to KABATA? Does
24 that answer the question?

25 MR. LAVERTY: Yeah.

1 MS. SLATONBARKER: That was good to make that
2 point. I think there was confusion on that. Anyone else
3 in the room who would like to share some thoughts or ask
4 a question? Sure. Come on up.

5 MR. MILLER: My name is Mike Miller,
6 M-I-L-L-E-R. Did the gentleman who was addressing the
7 audience mention how in 1964 we were cut off from the
8 northernmost ice-free port in early spring -- the first
9 week of spring when the Chester Creek trestle went out?
10 This crossing it seems to me will become an integral part
11 of a bridging infrastructure and important for much more
12 than just maintaining itself. It will have a great deal
13 of economic impact as Mr. Tesche mentioned. And the
14 human impact could be tragic.

15 There hasn't been a run of fish in Chester
16 Creek since the earthquake. The Corps put in a turf and
17 culvert bridge. I didn't prepare myself. I just learned
18 of this.

19 MS. SLATONBARKER: That's great. Thank you
20 very much for your comments. Thank you very much.
21 Anybody else? Well, I want to thank you all for coming.
22 This has been really an informative session. Thanks for
23 sharing your good ideas and your questions. Hopefully,
24 we've provided some answers. And I want to remind you
25 that we have a comment deadline for those of you who want

1 to take the comment sheet home and provide some more
2 information for us, or pass it around in your
3 neighborhood. That's great. Our comment deadline is
4 August 12th. So thank you very much. So please have a
5 drink and have a cookie. The project team members will
6 be around if you want to stay and chat. And have a great
7 evening, and hopefully there's still some sunshine
8 outside.

9 (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 _____, 2005.

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