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**\*\*Alaska Public Interest Research Group \*\*Alaska Center for the Environment  
\*\*Sierra Club \*\*Cook Inlet Keeper \*\*Alaska Conservation Alliance \*\*Alaska  
Transportation Priorities Project**

April 11, 2004

Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority  
Henry Springer, Executive Director  
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 1850  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Mr. Springer:

We are writing to you today because we oppose the proposed Knik Arm Crossing. We believe the project is unnecessary and will lead to more sprawl, decreasing the quality of life of Anchorage and surrounding areas. In addition, the \$200 million in the Federal budget this year and the estimated \$1.54 billion total cost (1/31/03 Engineering Feasibility & Cost Estimate Update prepared by Parsons Brinckerhoff/HDR Alaska, Inc.) is simply way too great a price to pay for a project that we do not need.

Alaska has too many potholes and maintenance needs without being hamstrung by a big new mega-project that will overextend limited resources. According to the American Society of Civil Engineers Report Card for America's Infrastructure:

- 30% of Alaska's bridges are structurally deficient or functionally obsolete
- 33% of roads are in poor condition
- Driving on roads in need of repair costs Alaska motorists \$102 million a year in extra vehicle repairs and operating costs -- \$212 per motorist.

The bridge will not cut commuting times from the valley. Yet, an enhanced connection between Anchorage and the Mat-Su Valley to the North can be made at a tiny fraction of the cost, using existing transportation corridors, by developing commuter rail between Anchorage and Palmer-Wasilla. The Alaska Railroad is already working to straighten the tracks, an intermodal station has been built on the Palmer end, and another intermodal station is planned on the Anchorage end.

In addition, Cook Inlet Beluga Whales, a species of special concern numbering less than 400 animals, depend on Knik Arm and the area affected by the bridge for feeding grounds. The construction and maintenance of the proposed bridge will further jeopardize this important wildlife species.

The scoping hearings are too narrow in their focus. The hearings are focusing only on the proposed bridge itself and not where it will land on local communities like Government Hill. Supposedly the bridge will go over, through, around or even through a tunnel under Government Hill. The socioeconomic impacts of just that portion of the project point to the large overall detriment the project is.

Therefore we believe Alaska, the Alaskan state budget and the Federal budget will be much better off without the proposed Knik Arm Bridge.

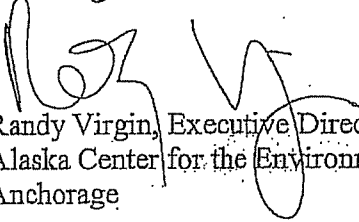
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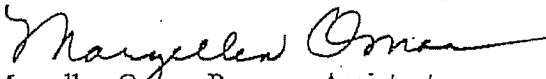
Sincerely,



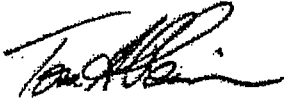
Steve Cleary  
AkPIRG Executive Director  
Anchorage



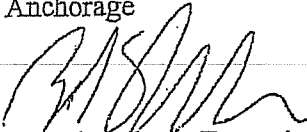
Randy Virgin, Executive Director  
Alaska Center for the Environment  
Anchorage



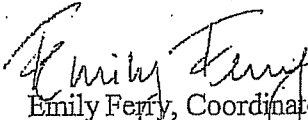
Maryellen Orman, Program Assistant  
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