

# NEWS RELEASE



## **For Immediate Release**

December 29, 2004

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## **Knik Arm Bridge to prepare Environmental Impact Statement**

The Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) has taken the next step toward advancing the Knik Arm project. With the completion of this season's fieldwork, KABATA has asked the Federal Highway Administration to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) that is necessary to evaluate the project's potential impact on the environment and obtain construction permits.

Fieldwork data gathered on Beluga whales, fisheries, marine sediments, wave and tidal actions, and Knik Arm bathymetry will help provide information needed during the EIS process. Henry Springer, executive director for KABATA, said: "This information should help the scoping process by giving the public, environmental and regulatory agencies facts based on current field research."

Three Alaska consulting firms – HDR, URS and PND Engineering – have managed the fieldwork this year. "It's reassuring to see the availability of talent in Alaska to undertake specialized work of this nature," said Darryl Jordan, KABATA deputy executive director, "Furthermore, we were very pleased to have selected many of the same firms to continue to work during the EIS phase."

Sufficient funding is available to proceed with the EIS and permitting phase; that phase will probably take at least a year and a half.

The Knik Arm project's financing for the construction phase remains dependent in part on passage of the federal transportation bill, currently before Congressman Don Young's House Transportation Committee. As a toll authority, KABATA expects to issue revenue bonds for a portion of the construction costs. A separate traffic and toll study will be undertaken to determine the amount of debt that can be repaid from tolls.

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