



Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce

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April 9, 2020

Delivered via email

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski, US Senate
The Honorable Dan Sullivan, US Senate
The Honorable Don Young, US House of Representatives

Subject: Congressional authorization and funding for a Juneau Road Connection to the Continental Highway System

We ask that you request Congress to authorize and include funding for construction of a road to connect Juneau to the continental highway system in the proposed infrastructure bill being considered in Congress.

Juneau is the only capital city on the continent without a road connection to the continental highway system. The lack of 65 miles of roadway isolates Juneau, Alaska's capital city, from highway access to Interior Alaska's economic and population centers, neighboring provincial government centers, and the lower 48 states. This project will construct about 65 miles of roadway that will eliminate the socio-economic restrictions imposed by infrequent and costly ferry service. A road connection will provide adequate capacity and free movement of movement of residents, visitors, goods, and services at will. Freedom of movement will be more reliable and at less cost to both traveler and commercial carriers of essential goods and freight. This project will provide immediate and long-term stimulus to the region and the state. This project also addresses regional and national security issues.

In addition to Alaska's capital, Juneau serves as the primary commercial center for Southeast Alaska. The lack of a road connection restricts area and regional economic development by restricting tourism via road, restricting transport of fresh seafood products by truck, trucking in freight between barge arrivals to maintain economic inventories of critical resources, essential goods, and services in support of fisheries, mines, tourism, and government. Good highway access is essential to development and maintenance of a strong economy. Alaska and Southeast Alaska needs construction of 65 miles of highway. We believe the continental system should be extended to Juneau in the interest of national security.

Several direct roadway connections have been identified with over forty years of socio-economic, environmental, wildlife, land surveys, geotechnical studies, and preliminary engineering. In as much as there is a wealth of environmental information available; we request that Congress authorizes the state to:

- 1) Issue a Notice to Proceed (NOI) with the development of an environmental document in support of constructing approximately 65 miles of road to connect Juneau to the continental highway system; and that the environmental document serve for receipt of all necessary permits and draw on information and data provided by all interested agencies and parties within six months of the NOI.
- 2) Direct that all environmental, right of way, engineering studies and design be accomplished under design-construct contracts with all work conducted simultaneously using best management practices.
- 3) Initiate construction in phases or segments as plans and funding for each segment is approved by the state within one to two years of issuance of the NOI.
- 4) The above project requirements are authorized notwithstanding federal environmental laws, regulations, and permit requirements and any other laws associated with environmental documentation and permitting of the Juneau Road Connection Project are waived.

For this project to move forward without litigation, we need exemption from the NEPA process and its attendant litigation opportunities. Cost estimate \$900 million over three years. Project can be accelerated if most of the funding can be made available early by enabling construction starts at both ends and in the middle.

As rumor of a fourth stimulus bill dealing with the crisis caused by COVID-19 is to include infrastructure projects, we believe that a Juneau Road Connection Project can fit into that category. The congressional actions requested above will move it into action quickly. This project will stimulate the area economy well out in the foreseeable future.

Respectfully,



Charlie Williams, President
The Board of Directors
Greater Juneau Chamber of Commerce

907-321-2424 vpc@gci.net

cc: The Honorable Dan Sullivan, US Senate
The Honorable Don Young, US House of Representatives
The Honorable Mike Dunleavy, Governor of Alaska
State Senator Jesse Kiehl
State Representative Sara Hannan
State Representative Andi Story
Mayor Beth Weldon, City & Borough of Juneau