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**Subject: May 2025 Planning & Environmental Linkage Draft Juneau-Douglas
North Crossing Study Report – Comment through June 9, 2025**

For the record, I am submitting this document personally and not as a member of any organization.

We are finally finishing with the PEL study portion of the Juneau-Douglas second crossing study. One of the major purposes of the study is to expedite the NEPA portion of this whole exercise. This study was predicted by DOWL, the contractor, as a 1 ½ year project. After 3+ years of conflicting and controversial debate and documentation, the final proposal is available for public comment. The pre-NEPA process was designed to expedite the EIS review and narrow down the options available to those that were reasonable alternatives, fit the purposes of the proposal, met federal and state statute and regulatory requirements and offered alternatives that were financially feasible.

The level 2 screening process did find some noticeable improvements. The scoring definitely changed which amplified what many of us had been advocating which is that impacts to the resources and users lessened as the crossing alternatives moved further East.. It also ended up with the East and West Sunny Point alternatives being the most impactful options concerning resource and user impacts which is counter to what the study implied in the level 1 screening. Since the purposes of the PEL study was to narrow down the options for the NEPA review, it is hard to understand why both alternatives were not eliminated. I favor keeping Salmon Creek and Twin Lakes as the two crossing alternatives. Vanderbilt is a much-improved alternative compared to East

or West Sunny Point crossings but it has significantly more impacts on Refuge resources and users than either Twin Lakes or Salmon Creek.

I want to comment on one important but peripheral issue. The Pel Study was contracted to DOWL. The next important related issue is who will DOTPF decide will get the NEPA contract. I am opposed to DOWL being awarded the contract. They have shown total ineptness in handling this type of environmental project. The two year over-run had to cost DOTPF, CBJ or a federal agency something. I doubt DOWL absorbed the extension costs created by their miscalculations. Plus, all of the gigantic mistakes made during this process show a complete lack of an adequate scientific and technical background needed to provide a credible product. The scoring process was totally inaccurate which is reflected in the level 2 screening versus the number 1 screening.

Numerous other miscalculations indicate the organization is motivated more by the politics of the issue rather than the product of a technical evaluation.

1. A Public poll was conducted very early in this process which DOWL constantly refers to as an illustration of strong public support while the info given to the public did not even provide the basics such as the fact that a Wildlife Refuge occupied the area. This is deceptive marketing.
2. Somehow a release was given to the Juneau Empire indicating that the East Sunny Point alternative was the preferred alternative. Even though none of the alternatives had been rated.
3. Political Pressure by DOWL, CBJ, or DOTPF was applied to the Department of Fish and Game Commissioner's office to keep the Department from doing their statutory responsibility to manage and protect the Refuge by providing the technical wildlife and user data to illustrate and rank each crossing impacts on the resources and the user public.
4. Numerous comments and suggestions by local organizations were conveniently ignored.
5. Illogical field studies were conducted in September for 2-3 weeks to somehow equate wildlife uses for an entire year.
6. DOWL refused to use new and comprehensive data and screening information from organizations like SEALT.
7. DOWL refused to utilize published information from local marine environment experts that were submitted as comments.
8. Most importantly, DOWL lost sight of the purpose of the PEL study which was to narrow down the options for the NEPA review. Actually, the PEL study could have

been completed after the development of the Level 1 Screening. That would have saved millions of dollars and resulted in virtually the same product.

9. Running a bridge on piling straight through the center of the Refuge would clearly impact the viewshed from all of the open portions of Egan Drive and North Douglas but little or no attention is given to this visual impact on visitors and local users.

In order to get an acceptable product, it is critical that DOWL not be awarded the contract for the NEPA review. They have demonstrated that they are more motivated by the financial impacts on DOWL and political implications than developing a credible and technical scientific product that has a chance of being supported by the public, and the State and Federal agencies.

As a side note, I cannot believe as a long time Juneau and Alaska resident that we would prioritize spending millions of dollars on a shakingly justified second crossing while the valley flooding is a giant problem for homeowners, residents are fighting runaway property taxes, the Juneau residents are fighting new expensive projects like a new City Hall and a luxury entertainment hall. The major problem for North Douglas is not access from the mainland but the lack of adequate highway transportation (i.e. a bench road) that would provide instant relief to North Douglas residents.

I appreciate the opportunity to comment on this final PEL product for the second crossing.

Sincerely,

Note: Signed on Original

Ron Somerville

Cc: CBJ Assembly

DOTPF

DOWL