AMD13_182
4/11/07

Jessie White

From: Jim Scholl [jim_scholl@dot.state.ak.us]
Sent: Tuesday, April 10, 2007 8:34 AM
To: 'Jessie White'
Subject: FW: STIP Comments
Attachments: Letter to Leo von Scheben.pdf

Jessie, Please log this in as a comment. Thanks!

From: Bob Laurie [mailto:bob_laurie@dot.state.ak.us]
Sent: Monday, April 09, 2007 4:06 PM
To: 'Jim Scholl'
Subject: FW: STIP Comments

Jim,
This came in to me;' forwarding to you for the STIP file.
Bob

From: Mayor Mark Begich [mailto:Mayor@ci.anchorage.ak.us]
Sent: Monday, April 09, 2007 1:25 PM
To: peter.serrano@fhwa.dot.gov; Amy.Changchien@fta.dot.gov; bob_laurie@dot.state.ak.us; john_mackinnon@dot.state.ak.us; gordon_keith@dot.state.ak.us; tom_chapple@dec.state.ak.us
Cc: Abbott, Michael K.
Subject: STIP Comments

Municipality of Anchorage

P.O. Box 196650 • Anchorage, Alaska 99519-6650 • Telephone: (907) 343-4431 • Fax: (907) 343-4499 http://www.muni.org

Mayor Mark Begich

Office of the Mayor

April 6, 2007

Leo von Scheben, Commissioner
Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities
Office of the Commissioner
3132 Channel Drive
Juneau, AK 99801-7898

Dear Commissioner von Scheben:

Thank you for the opportunity to review the proposed 2006-2009 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) Draft Amendment #13. The proposed program continues the recent trend of decreasing amounts of federal road money for Anchorage. The proposed AMATS allocation would result in significant delays in many projects important to us.

Our concerns fall into three primary areas:

- Serious under-funding of Non-National Highway System (NHS) roads in Anchorage;
- Lack of support for critical National Highway System projects in Anchorage;
- Elimination of congestion mitigation and air quality programs necessary to relieve congestion and reduce vehicle emissions in Anchorage.

Non-National Highway System

Since 2004 the allocation to AMATS has dropped by more than 50 percent. This level of a reduction has already impacted and will continue to impact delivery of major construction projects. Projects that would be delayed due to this decrease in AMATS' allocation include but are not limited to the following:

Old Seward Highway Reconstruction – delayed 2 more years
Victor Road Reconstruction – delayed 3 more years
Eagle River Road Reconstruction – delayed 3 more years
Old Glenn Highway Reconstruction – delayed 3 more years
Spenard Road Reconstruction – delayed 3 more years
Abbott Road Reconstruction – delayed at least 3 more years
O'Malley Road Reconstruction – delayed at least 4 more years

Projects are being delayed for so long it doesn't make sense to even start them due to the continued uncertainty of funding even though they remain priorities of the community.

National Highway System

It appears that two critical Seward Highway projects (36th Avenue to Rabbit Creek and Rabbit Creek to Potter Valley) are either delayed or eliminated in this proposed STIP. It also appears the Seward Highway projects along Turnagain Arm are also going to be further delayed. These projects will impact tens of thousands of Anchorage residents every day. Public meetings held recently regarding Seward Highway projects created the expectation of near-term activity on several of these projects.

It is very difficult to see other projects with significantly less public benefit continue to receive priority funding while projects that benefit tens of thousands of Anchorage commuters see their projects go unsupported.

Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality

The proposed STIP amendment #13 would completely end the CMAQ allocation in our area, and would therefore result in many important needs of our community being ignored. The CMAQ program has been and should continue to be allocated to AMATS at a minimum of $3 million annually to support maintaining its good air quality and to address congestion mitigation projects. We are also concerned about the possibility of violating federal air quality standards if we lose this funding. We understand that other remote areas of Alaska have issues with dust problems, but these congestion mitigation and air quality funds are needed in the Anchorage area to maintain our current air quality status and help solve our numerous congestion problems.

I recognize the challenge in allocating funding resources throughout the state and the difficult task ADOT&PF has in facing that challenge. However, the delays in project development that would result from the proposed allocation to AMATS would result in unacceptable increases in fatalities, congestion and maintenance costs. I would respectfully request that ADOT&PF revise its total allocation to AMATS to better reflect a proportionate per capita allocation. I would also request ADOT&PF reexamine its NHS allocation to the Seward Highway projects.

Sincerely,

Mark Begich
Mayor

cc: Peter Serrano, P.E., Transportation Planner, FHWA
Amy Changchien, Community Planner, FTA Region 10
Bob Laurie, Transportation Planner, Statewide Program Development, ADOT&PF
John MacKinnon, Deputy Commissioner Highways & Public Facilities, ADOT&PF
Gordon Keith, Central Region Director, ADOT&PF
Tom Chapple, Director, Division of Air Quality, ADEC
Anchorage Legislative Caucus
Anchorage Assembly