



# Municipality of Anchorage

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*Mayor Mark Begich*

Office of the Mayor

March 24, 2008

The Honorable Johnny Ellis  
Alaska State Senate  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Ellis:

I write in support of your Senate Bill 268 (SB 268) and its companion, House Bill 365 (HB 365). As I expressed in a letter to Governor Palin last summer, a public project of a size and cost like the Knik Arm Crossing requires a healthy and transparent public process and a thorough, performance-based project agreement.

As you know, I have been supportive of a Knik Arm Crossing that meets the needs of Southcentral Alaska without needlessly harming a resurgent downtown Anchorage or reducing federal and state transportation dollars for scores of other vital transportation projects. While I disagree with the AMATS decision to narrow the scope of the project and add more traffic to an already overburdened downtown C street corridor, this project is moving ahead, and I am committed to making it the best possible project for my constituents and this state.

As Governor Palin and the Legislature have rightfully championed with the Alaska Gasline Inducement Act, government functions best when it is open and transparent. SB 268 provides that transparency. Additionally, private parties accepting public funds also need clear benchmarks to ensure their performance. Projects of this scale require broad public trust. That trust is gained from wide-reaching, collaborative process that encourages citizen involvement.

The Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority (KABATA) currently contemplates that a public-private partnership construct and maintain this project in return for the rights to the toll revenues from the bridge. While these types of partnerships are gaining popularity across the United States, they are still new and we have no experience with them in Alaska. That should signal extreme caution in drafting

*Community, Security, Prosperity*

Senator Johnny Ellis

March 24, 2008

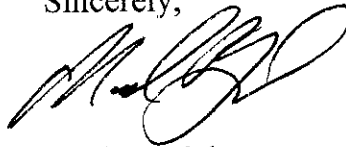
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such an agreement, and the standards required in SB 268 go a good distance towards that goal.

Beyond the stewardship of the mammoth public investment to date, a private company's management actions would directly affect significant transportation, quality of life, and environmental issues for citizens in both Anchorage and the Matanuska-Susitna Valley. At minimum, performance standards should include: adequate maintenance of all infrastructure, adequate and measurable air quality and noise standards, pedestrian, bicycle and multi-modal transportation options, as well as concrete triggers for completing the connection to the Gambell-Ingra corridor to relieve the inevitable traffic congestion brought about by any additional traffic the bridge delivers to downtown Anchorage.

Revisiting KABATA's authorizing legislation via SB 268 is a good step towards establishing these benchmarks. Thank you for sponsoring this forward-thinking legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mark Begich', written in a cursive style.

Mark Begich  
Mayor

cc: The Honorable Les Gara