

**Federal Highway Administration  
and  
Federal Transit Administration**

**FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT  
For  
Gustavus Causeway Replacement  
Project No. 67599/BR-0003(53)**

Issued Pursuant to 42 U.S.C. 4332 (2)(c) and 23 U.S.C. 128 (a)

In May 2008, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) authorized publication of the Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project. The project would replace a dock facility in Gustavus, Alaska that has deteriorated to the extent that it is becoming unsafe to use, and can no longer support the freight, bulk fuel transfer and marine vessel passenger needs of the community. The new facility would include: 1) a wider trestle that would handle 2-way traffic; 2) a securable staging area for vehicles and freight; 3) a dock that would handle wheeled freight containers and future Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service; and 4) an upgraded fuel-transfer pipeline.

The project includes:

- Constructing a 1,100-foot by 28-foot steel-pile supported open-grate approach trestle.
- Constructing a 220-foot by 110-foot (0.6 acre useable space) filled staging area near the dock entrance.
- Constructing a steel-pile supported grate-decked mooring dock incorporating a wave barrier to protect the transfer pontoon and floating dock.
- Installing six steel-pile lead-in and breasting dolphins.
- Allow for installation of three breasting dolphins for barge use during construction.
- Constructing a pontoon-supported steel transfer bridge, ramp and apron.
- Constructing a new fuel-transfer pipeline for transferring fuel from barges to the on-shore community tank farm piping.
- Re-locating existing small vessel mooring floats with new connections from the floats to the new dock and trestle.
- Removing the existing timber trestle, dock structures and dolphins.

**Minimization, Mitigation, or Enhancement Measures:** The following avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the project to reduce impacts to important and protected resources:

- The 0.6 acre offshore securable staging area is the minimum size needed for staging ferry vehicle traffic, parking, diesel generator, and minimizing conflicts with traffic on the trestle.
- The staging area is designed to be far enough from shore (about 500 ft from the high tide line) to minimize potential adverse impacts to fish migration or littoral sediment transport.
- The trestle and dock will be constructed of steel piling and grating which has low toxicity from leaching in the marine environment.
- To minimize effects of pile driving, a vibratory hammer will be used for all piles installed, with impact-driving used only for final proofing of a few selected piles.
- Over 200 creosote-treated pilings with known toxicity to aquatic organisms will be removed.
- Riprap placed to stabilize the offshore staging area will be monitored to assess habitat value for marine fish and other species.
- As mitigation for potential construction impacts, this project will fund replacement of a set of culverts on Rink Creek Road that partially block fish migration with a stream crossing designed for fish passage. The culverts will be replaced under a separate project/procurement – the Gustavus Airport Runway Safety Area Improvements.
- The project contract specifications will include special conditions for implementation and maintenance of Best Management Practices during construction including a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), Spill Prevention and Control and Countermeasure Plan (SPCCP), and Hazardous Materials Control Plan (HMCP) to minimize impacts to water quality.
- A marine mammal monitor will be assigned to the project during pile driving operations.

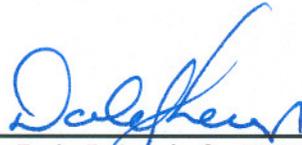
On May 4, 11 and 18, 2008, the local project sponsor Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) published an advertisement of the availability of the EA, the public comment period and date of the public hearing in the *Juneau Empire*. The advertisement was also posted at the City Hall and other public places in Gustavus. On May 13, 2008 DOT&PF mailed copies of the EA to 21 interested individuals, local, state and federal agencies. Copies of the EA were also made available at the City Hall and public library in Gustavus, the public library in Juneau, the DOT&PF Regional Office in Juneau and at the public hearing in Gustavus on May 28, 2008.

Appendix A contains revisions to the EA made in response to comments. Appendix B contains all comments and responses to them. Appendix C contains the project commitment list and Appendix D the circulation list.

In accordance with National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4332 et seq.) as amended, and 23 CFR 771.221, the FHWA and FTA have determined that the proposed Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project, as defined in the EA, will have no significant adverse impacts on the environment. This FONSI is based on the EA dated May 2008, which is incorporated by reference, along with other documents and attachments, as itemized in the EA and in this FONSI, along with the findings herein. The FHWA and FTA have independently evaluated the EA and determined that it adequately discusses the Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project purpose and need, environmental issues, impacts of the proposed action and appropriate mitigation measures as may be required.

7/23/2008

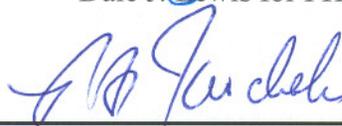
Date



Dale J. Lewis for FHWA

8/14/08

Date



R. F. Krochalis for FTA

For additional information about this document, contact the following agency representatives:

Dale Lewis  
Transportation Program Manager  
FHWA, Alaska Division  
709 West 9<sup>th</sup> Street  
Juneau, AK 99802-1649

Linda Gehrke  
Deputy Regional Administrator  
Federal Transit Administration, Region X  
915 Second Avenue  
Seattle, WA 98174-1002

Jim Petropulos, P.E.  
Preliminary Design & Environmental Group Chief  
DOT&PF, Southeast Region  
P.O. Box 112506  
6860 Glacier Highway  
Juneau, AK 99807

# **APPENDIX A**

## **Errata, Revisions, and Additional Information**

## ***ERRATA***

Based on comments received during public review of the Environmental Assessment for the Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project the following changes, additions and corrections have made to the Revised Environmental Assessment. Deletions are in strikethrough, additions are in **bold** in brackets [ ].

### **4.3.2.3 Public Services**

***No Action.*** Under the No Action alternative the demand for public services would remain at current levels in the short-term. However the eventual closure of the dock would result in loss in employment and population, with a resulting loss of City tax revenue needed to provide public services. The net result would be a decline in the level of public services.

***Proposed Action.*** There could be additional public service needs associated with an increase in pedestrian and vehicle travel to Gustavus. This could include public restrooms near the dock, increased demand for facilities for campers, visitor information services, and ground transportation to the National Park and airport. Based on conditions seen at other Southeast Alaska communities with AMHS service, the improved transportation would not trigger rapid population growth or need for additional public services. Most of the traffic predicted from AMHS service would be current Gustavus residents, thus there would not be a measurable increase in demands on local facilities and services. AMHS ferry service is estimated to bring only 25-45 RVs per year to Gustavus during the summer season. Some ferry-riders with cars and RVs that are not familiar with Gustavus might expect to find services such as campgrounds or RV waste disposal that are not available in Gustavus or the National Park. **[The potential need to provide expanded camping and RV facilities would be addressed by private enterprise, and would be considered economic benefits to the community.]** The only public campground is located in the National Park and is a walk-in facility. ~~The National Park may need to expand camping facilities and accommodate RVs if the demand warranted it. This type of visitor could also provide an opportunity for a private business to develop and operate an RV camping facility.~~ Restroom facilities are currently not available at the dock, and may be needed when AMHS ferry service was provided. **[The needs for restrooms, trash management, and improving law enforcement and emergency response are identified in the Gustavus Strategic Plan 2005. The City of Gustavus has jurisdiction and intends to provide these services.]**

Appendix B, Socioeconomic Analysis: On page 12, Commercial Fishing, the report erroneously states that “There was no change in the amount of sablefish quota shares (478,951 pounds) owned by Gustavus residents in 2003 and in 2007.” This should read 478,951 *shares* rather than pounds.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Comments on the Environmental Assessment and Responses**

### **Advertisement of the EA, public hearing and response to comments**

On May 4, 11 and 18, 2008, the local project sponsor Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) published an advertisement of the availability of the Environmental Assessment (EA), the public comment period and date of the public hearing in the *Juneau Empire*. The advertisement was also posted at the City Hall and other public places in Gustavus. On May 13, 2008 DOT&PF mailed copies of the EA to 21 interested individuals, local, state and federal agencies. Copies of the EA were also made available at the City Hall and public library in Gustavus, the public library in Juneau, the DOT&PF Regional Office in Juneau and at the public hearing in Gustavus on May 28, 2008.

Comments were received during oral testimony at the May 28, 2008 public hearing, by written comments and phone messages. This appendix contains the following documentation regarding public review and response to comments on the EA:

- Affidavit of Publication of notice of availability of the EA
- Notification letters sent to agencies and interested parties
- Sign in sheet at May 28, 2008 public hearing
- Handouts at public hearing
- Transcript of public hearing and oral testimony
- Summary of comments and responses
- Copies of written comments received

AFFIDAVIT of PUBLICATION

United States of America  
State of Alaska  
First Division

Account No: 15110181  
Tag Line: 500-053

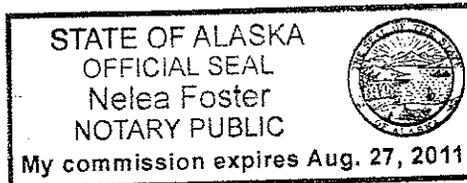
I, My'Kellia Mooney, being first duly sworn, oath  
depose and say that I am the Principle Clerk of  
the JUNEAU EMPIRE, a newspaper of general  
circulation, published in the city of Juneau,  
State of Alaska and that the publication, of  
which the annexed is a true copy, was  
published in said newspaper on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of  
May 2008 and thereafter for 1 additional day(s),  
the last date of publication being May 11<sup>th</sup> 2008.

*My'Kellia Mooney*

Subscribed and sworn to before me this 12<sup>th</sup>  
day of May 2008.

*Nelea Foster*

Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska



**State of Alaska**  
**Department of Transportation**  
**& Public Facilities**

**Notice of Availability of an**  
**Environmental Assessment**  
**Gustavus Causeway Replacement**  
**Project No. 67599**

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) has produced an Environmental Assessment (EA) of impacts associated with proposed replacement and upgrade the old timber trestle and dock in Gustavus, Alaska with a steel-pile supported structure. The new facility would provide the community with improved freight transfer capabilities and would accommodate future Alaska Marine Highway System ferry service.

Following review by agencies and the public, the document will be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for approval. Upon approval the FHWA and FTA will prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed action detailing their conditions of approval.

The document has been distributed to agencies and organizations involved in the project. It is also available for public inspection at the Gustavus and Juneau Public Libraries, Gustavus City Hall, and at the Environmental Office of DOT&PF Regional Complex at 7-mile Glacier Highway, Juneau, Alaska. DOT&PF will hold a hearing at the Gustavus School Multipurpose Room on May 19 at 7:00 pm.

Comments on the document must be received by 5:00 pm June 9, 2008 to be considered. Send comments to:

Jim Petropulos, PE  
Preliminary Design & Engineering Group Chief  
and Acting SE Region Environmental Manager  
DOT&PF  
6860 Glacier Highway  
P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, AK 99801-2506

If you have any questions or require additional information please call Carl Schrader at 465-4544, text phone (TTY-TDD) 465-4647 or email [carl.schrader@alaska.gov](mailto:carl.schrader@alaska.gov)

Publish: May 4 and 11, 2008      500-013

AFFIDAVIT of PUBLICATION

United States of America  
State of Alaska  
First Division

Account No: 15110181  
Tag Line: 500-038

State of Alaska  
Department of Transportation &  
Public Facilities

Notice of Availability of an  
Environmental Assessment  
and Public Hearing

Gustavus Causeway Replacement  
Project No. 67599

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT&PF) has produced an Environmental Assessment (EA) of impacts associated with proposed replacement and upgrade the old timber trestle and dock in Gustavus, Alaska with a steel-pile supported structure. The new facility would provide the community with improved freight transfer capabilities and would accommodate future Alaska Marine Highway System ferry service.

Following review by agencies and the public, the document will be forwarded to the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) for approval. Upon approval the FHWA and FTA will prepare a Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) for the proposed action detailing their conditions of approval.

The document has been distributed to agencies and organizations involved in the project. It is also available for public inspection at the Gustavus and Juneau Public Libraries, Gustavus City Hall, and at the Environmental Office of DOT&PF Regional Complex at 7-mile Glacier Highway, Juneau, Alaska. DOT&PF will hold a hearing at the Gustavus School Multipurpose Room on May 28 at 7:00 pm. Please note that the hearing date has been changed from May 19 posted in an earlier notice.

Comments on the document must be received by 5:00 pm June 9, 2008 to be considered. Send comments to:

Jim Petropulos, P.E.

Preliminary Design & Environmental Group Chief  
and Acting SE Region Environmental Manager,

DOT&PF

6860 Glacier Highway  
P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, AK 99801-2506

If you have any questions or require additional information please call Carl Schrader at 465-4544, text phone (TTY-TDD) 465-4647 or email [carl.schrader@alaska.gov](mailto:carl.schrader@alaska.gov)

Publish: May 18, 2008 500-038

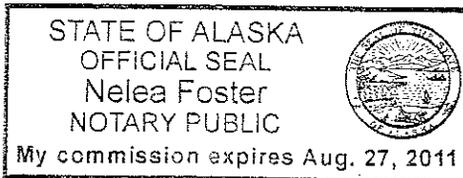
I, My'Kellia Mooney, being first duly sworn, oath depose and say that I am the Principle Clerk of the JUNEAU EMPIRE, a newspaper of general circulation, published in the city of Juneau, State of Alaska and that the publication, of which the annexed is a true copy, was published in said newspaper on the 18<sup>th</sup> day of May 2008 and thereafter for 0 additional day(s), the last date of publication being May 18<sup>th</sup> 2008.



Subscribed and sworn to before me this 13<sup>th</sup> day of June 2008.



Notary Public in and for the State of Alaska



# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

*Design and Engineering Services – Southeast Region  
Preconstruction – Preliminary Design & Environmental Services*

**SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR**

6860 GLACIER HIGHWAY  
P.O. Box 112506  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-2506

PHONE: (907) 465-4544  
TEXT: (907) 465-4647  
FAX: (907) 465-3506

May 13, 2008

RE: Gustavus Causeway Replacement  
Environmental Assessment  
Project #67599

### To Distribution:

Enclosed for your review and comment is an Environmental Assessment (EA) of a proposed project to replace the deteriorated trestle and dock in Gustavus, Alaska. The Department of Transportation and Public facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) proposes to construct a new marine facility at the same location that would provide the community with improved freight transfer capabilities and would accommodate future Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service.

The EA discusses the purpose and need for the project, how the project meets those needs, and the predicted environmental effects of the project. Measures taken to avoid, minimize and compensate for project impacts are also described. The primary environmental issues are: potential socioeconomic impacts to the community from future AMHS ferry service, tideland fill needed for a vehicle staging area, and temporary noise and disturbance during construction. Based on coordination with agencies, Alaska Native tribes and the public, we have determined that the project would not adversely affect any resources in the area.

If you have comments on this EA, please respond by June 9, 2008. Comments by phone or e-mail are encouraged. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at (907) 465-4544 or by e-mail at [carl.schrader@alaska.gov](mailto:carl.schrader@alaska.gov).

Sincerely,



Carl Schrader  
Project Environmental Coordinator

### Enclosure:

Environmental Assessment – Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project

Distribution list:

Steve Brockmann, Acting Field Supervisor, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Juneau  
Doug Mecum, Acting Regional Administrator, National Marine Fisheries Service, Juneau  
Cherry Payne, Superintendent, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve  
Jennifer Curtis, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Anchorage  
Jackie Timothy, Department of Natural Resources-OHMP, Juneau  
John Leeds, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Juneau  
Claire Batac, Department of Natural Resources-DCOM, Juneau  
Judith Bittner, State Historic Preservation Officer, DNR, Anchorage  
Bruce Wanstall, Department of Environmental Conservation-Contaminated Sites, Juneau

E-mail cc:

Bern Savikko, P.E., Engineering Manager, ADOT&PF  
Jim Petropulos, P.E., Preliminary Design and Environmental Group Chief/Acting  
Regional Environmental Coordinator, ADOT&PF  
Dale Lewis, FHWA, Juneau  
Amy Changchien, FTA, Seattle  
Amy McLeod, DOT&PF, Juneau  
Katharine Miller, NMFS, Juneau  
Alex Dugaqua, DNR-MLW, Juneau

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

*Design and Engineering Services – Southeast Region  
Preconstruction – Preliminary Design & Environmental  
Services*

**SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR**

6860 GLACIER HIGHWAY  
P.O. Box 112506  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-2506

PHONE: (907) 465-4544  
TEXT: (907) 465-4647  
FAX: (907) 465-3506

May 13, 2008

RE: Gustavus Causeway Replacement  
Environmental Assessment  
Project #67599

To Distribution:

Thank you for your interest and comments during the scoping process for the Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project. Enclosed for your review and comment is the Environmental Assessment (EA) for the proposed project to replace the deteriorated trestle and dock in Gustavus, Alaska. The Department of Transportation and Public facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and Federal Transit Administration (FTA) proposes to construct a new marine facility at the same location that would provide the community with improved freight transfer capabilities and would accommodate future Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service.

The EA discusses the purpose and need for the project, how the project meets those needs, and the predicted environmental effects of the project. Measures taken to avoid, minimize and compensate for project impacts are also described. The primary environmental issues are: potential socioeconomic impacts to the community from future AMHS ferry service, tideland fill needed for a vehicle staging area, and temporary noise and disturbance during construction. Based on coordination with agencies, Alaska Native tribes and the public, we have determined that the project would not adversely affect any resources in the area.

DOT&PF will hold a public meeting at he Gustavus School Multipurpose Room on May 28 at 7:00 pm that you are invited to attend. If you wish to comment on this EA, please respond by June 9, 2008. Comments by phone or e-mail are encouraged. If you have questions, please feel free to contact me at (907) 465-4544 or by e-mail at [carl.schrader@alaska.gov](mailto:carl.schrader@alaska.gov).

Sincerely,



Carl Schrader  
Project Environmental Coordinator

Enclosure:

Environmental Assessment -- Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project

Distribution list:

Allison Banks, P.O. Box 237, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Morgan DeBoer, P.O. Box 51, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Kim and Melanie Heacox, P.O. Box 359, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Denise and Jim Healey, P.O. Box 7, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Ken and Diane Klawunder, P.O. Box 156, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Robert Millard, P.O. Box 210923, Auke Bay, AK 99821-0923  
Kim Ney and Wayne Howell, P.O. Box 32, Gustavus AK 99826  
Charles Piedra and Jan Conitz, 619 W. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Juneau, AK 99801  
Greg Streveler, P.O. Box 94, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Marilyn and Allen Trump, P.O. Box 222, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Pedr Turner, P.O. Box 217, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Dan Zobrist and Carolyn Edelman, P.O. Box 176, Gustavus AK 99826

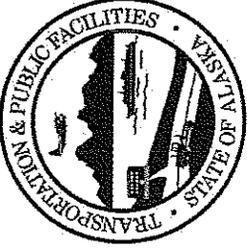
E-mail cc:

Bern Savikko, P.E., Engineering Manager, ADOT&PF  
Jim Petropulos, P.E., Preliminary Design and Environmental Group Chief/Acting  
Regional Environmental Coordinator, ADOT&PF  
Dale Lewis, FHWA, Juneau  
Amy Changchien, FTA, Seattle  
Amy McLeod, DOT&PF. Juneau

ALASKA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION  
AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

PUBLIC HEARING

SIGN IN SHEET



PROJECT NAME Gustavus Dock Improvements Environmental Assessment Public Hearing DATE: May 28, 2008

NAME—Please note if you will provide testimony. (PLEASE PRINT) Testimony Y or N	ADDRESS or EMAIL	PHONE
Sandi Marchbanks N	P Marchbanks@starkent.net PO Box 389, Gustavus	697-2741
Wayne Howell N	wknowell@gmsil.com P.O. Box 32 Gustavus 99826	697-2423
Kenneth L. Klaunder N	P.O. Box 156 Gustavus citycouncil3@gustavus-ak.gov	697-2422
Diane Kraunpeter N	P.O. Box 156 Gustavus, Ak. 99826	697-2422
LAWRENCE ROSS N	PO Box 4560T. Ak. 99826	707-2513 <del>707-310709</del>
Paul Berry N	Box 143	

PROJECT NAME Gustavus Dock Improvements Environmental Assessment Public Hearing DATE: May 28, 2008

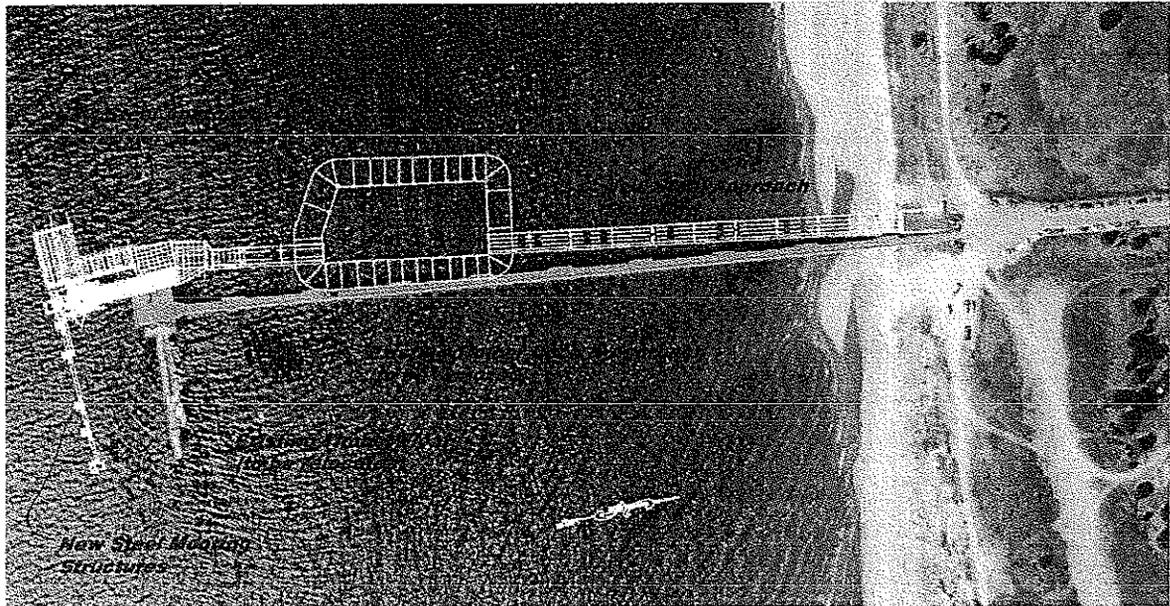
NAME—Please note if you will provide testimony. (PLEASE PRINT)	Testimony Y or N	ADDRESS or EMAIL	PHONE
CHRIS GABRIEL	N	PO Box 007 @ gmail.com Gustavus	697-2714
Carolyn Edelmann	N	PO Box 176 cedelmann@hughes.net GUST 99826 697-2806	
① DAN ZOBRIST	AY	Zobrist @ Hughes.net	
Jim Martell	N	* PO Box 231 Gustavus 99826	907 697 2124
ASIN) Barbara Carolyn Edin	N	P.O. Cardbill @ gustavus.ak.us	907 697 2778
Bill Brown	YN		697-2778
Greg Strickley	Y		
② Tom Gibson	AY		

Handout @  
Public Hearing 5/28/08

# ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

## GUSTAVUS CAUSEWAY REPLACEMENT

PROJECT #67599  
BR-0003(53)



*prepared by*  
**Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities**

*for the*  
**Federal Highway Administration**  
**Alaska Division**  
**P.O. Box 21648**  
**709 West 9th Street, Room 851**  
**Juneau, AK 99802-1648**

*and the*  
**Federal Transit Administration**  
**915 Second Ave.**  
**Federal Building, Suite 3142**  
**Seattle, WA 98174-1002**

**May 2008**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project**  
**DOT&PF Project No. 67599**

**Introduction:** The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF), in cooperation with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) proposes to replace the deteriorated community dock at Gustavus, Alaska. This Environmental Assessment (EA) considers a Proposed Action and a No Action alternative to address the needs of the community for a marine facility that would improve safety and accommodate marine freight, bulk fuel transfer, vessel passengers and Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service.

**Purpose and Need for the Project:** The existing dock at Gustavus has deteriorated to the point where it will soon no longer support the existing uses which include commercial fisheries, charter sport fishing, tour boats, passenger vessels, and other tourism-related activities which are the economic mainstay of the community. The dock and approach are load limited far below legal highway standards and the dock is not capable of freight transfer. The approach and dock have limited space; the approach has only one lane and the dock is only large enough for four vehicles. In addition, the pipeline for transferring bulk fuel from barges to the community tank farm is located on the dock and trestle.

Further deterioration of the trestle would jeopardize continued use of the pipeline and require the community to barge fuel in containers to a landing facility on the Salmon River. Because of regulatory restrictions in the National Park on commercial activities and on the types and numbers of marine vessels allowed, Bartlett Cove would not be available to support existing uses at the Gustavus Dock in the event the dock becomes unusable.

Because of the limitations of the dock, freight service to Gustavus and to Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve (National Park) is currently limited to delivery by landing craft, or shallow draft ramp barges at a landing facility on the Salmon River. The Salmon River facility has limited depth and is accessible only at high tides. This adds to the cost of moving freight and goods compared to a dock facility with roll on/roll off capabilities. The National Park Service (NPS) dock in Bartlett Cove isn't designed to handle heavy freight and serves only as a hand-carried freight and passenger dock. The National Park must now handle nearly all of their freight needs at the Salmon River facility.

The existing dock facility can not accommodate AMHS ferry service. AMHS service between Gustavus and Juneau would reduce the cost of transporting vehicles and passengers.

**PROPOSED ACTION**

The Proposed Action would replace the existing deteriorated trestle and dock with a new marine facility that would have efficient vessel passenger and freight handling capabilities. The new facility would include: 1) a wider trestle that would handle 2-way

traffic; 2) a securable staging area for vehicles and freight; 3) a dock that would handle wheeled freight containers and future Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service; and 4) an upgraded bulk fuel transfer pipeline. Anticipated AMHS ferry service would be a likely maximum of weekly service May through September and monthly service October through April.

The Proposed Action would include:

- Constructing a 1,100-foot by 28-foot steel-pile supported open-grate approach trestle.
- Constructing a 220-foot by 110-foot (0.6 acre of useable space) filled staging area near the dock entrance.
- Constructing a steel-pile supported grate-decked mooring dock incorporating a wave barrier to protect the transfer pontoon and floating dock.
- Installing six steel-pile lead-in and breasting dolphins.
- Allowing for installation of three breasting dolphins for barge use during construction.
- Constructing a pontoon-supported steel transfer bridge, ramp and apron.
- Constructing a new fuel-transfer pipeline for transferring fuel from barges to the onshore piping of the community tank farm.
- Re-locating existing small vessel mooring floats with new connections from the floats to the new pontoon, dock and trestle.
- Removing the existing timber trestle, dolphins and dock structures.

**Impacts:** No wetlands would be impacted. Approximately 1.6 acres of sandy/silty tide flats would be filled to provide 0.6 acres of useable space for the secure staging area. The character or population of the community would not be affected, nor would the Proposed Action impact existing services and infrastructure. The cost of moving goods and materials would remain relatively unchanged, but when AMHS ferry service is implemented the cost of transporting typical passenger vehicles and goods would drop from about \$1,200 to about \$135 round trip. Travel costs between Gustavus and Juneau would be reduced with AMHS service, but because service would be infrequent (limited to a likely maximum of once per week) there would not be a substantial increase in visitation by either pedestrians or vehicles. Most of the vehicle traffic on AMHS ferries would be Gustavus residents. RV traffic to Gustavus is predicted to be in the range of 25-45 visits (total) for the summer season with very few visits the remainder of the year.

**Minimization, Mitigation, or Enhancement Measures:** The following avoidance, minimization, and mitigation measures have been incorporated into the Proposed Action to reduce impacts to important and protected resources:

- The 0.6 acre offshore securable staging area is the minimum size needed for staging ferry vehicle traffic, parking, diesel generator, and minimizing conflicts with traffic on the trestle.

- The staging area is designed to be far enough from shore (about 500 ft from the high tide line) to minimize potential adverse impacts to fish migration or littoral sediment transport.
- The trestle and dock will be constructed of steel piling and grating which has low toxicity from leaching in the marine environment.
- To minimize effects of pile driving, a vibratory hammer will be used for all piles installed, with impact-driving used only for final proofing of a few selected piles.
- Over 200 creosote-treated pilings with known toxicity to aquatic organisms will be removed.
- Riprap placed to stabilize the offshore staging area will be monitored to assess habitat value for marine fish and other species.
- As mitigation for potential construction impacts, this project will fund replacement of a set of culverts on Rink Creek Road that partially block fish migration with a stream crossing designed for fish passage. The culverts will be replaced under a separate project/procurement – the Gustavus Airport Runway Safety Area Improvements.
- The project contract specifications will include special conditions for implementation and maintenance of Best Management Practices during construction including a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), Spill Prevention and Control and Countermeasure Plan (SPCCP), and Hazardous Materials Control Plan (HMCP) to minimize impacts to water quality.
- A marine mammal monitor will be assigned to the project during pile driving operations.

#### **Required Permits:**

- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers *Section 10* permit for work in navigable waters, and *Section 404* permit for discharge of fill to waters of the U.S.
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency National Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit for *Storm Water Discharge from Construction Activities*
- Department of Natural Resources Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) *Consistency Determination*
- Department of Environmental Conservation Clean Water Act, *Section 401 Certification of Reasonable Assurance*

#### **NO ACTION**

#### **Impacts:**

No action would lead to the eventual closure of the Gustavus dock and would have serious economic consequences for the community. The greatest impacts would be on the community's ability to access bulk fuel and loss of tourist enterprises and subsistence activities dependant on the dock. If the fuel pipeline were no longer available, fuel would need to be transported in bulk containers to the barge facility on the Salmon River, which would increase the cost of fuel for electrical power generation, heating and motor vehicles. If current dock users were not able to find alternate facilities or strategies, it is

possible that business closures could result. This would have a negative impact on direct and indirect jobs in the community. Increased use of the Salmon River landing facility would increase the risk of collisions and spills to the Salmon River (an important salmon stream) and continue use of the river and banks for all freight transfer.

## Public Hearing in Gustavus May 28, 2008

A public hearing was held on May 28, 2008 in Gustavus, Alaska. Fourteen people attended the hearing. Jane Gendron/DOT&PF provided hand-outs and made the following presentation. Following the presentation the public was invited to provide testimony and written comments. The proceedings were tape recorded and a transcription of verbal testimony is included below.

### PRESENTATION BY JANE GENDRON

This public hearing/meeting is being held as offered in 23 CFR Part 771—Environmental Impact and Related Procedures for FHWA. This meeting has been advertized and scheduled as required under 771.111 that allows you, the public, adequate time to review the EA before the hearing and allows adequate time after the hearing to provide input to FHWA and FTA in writing. You are invited to provide oral testimony at this meeting.

Summary of project's P&N, Proposed Action, and Impacts:

**Need:** The existing dock at Gustavus has deteriorated to the point where it will soon no longer support the existing uses which include commercial fisheries, charter sport fishing, tour boats, passenger vessels, and other tourism-related activities which are the economic mainstay of the community. The dock and approach are load limited far below legal highway standards and the dock is not capable of freight transfer. The pipeline for transferring bulk fuel from barges to the community tank farm is located on the dock and trestle. Travel costs for Gustavus resident's vehicles are more than twice as high as other SE Alaska communities where AMHS service is provided.

**Purpose:** To replace the existing deteriorated trestle and dock with a new marine facility that would have efficient vessel passenger and freight handling and AMHS service capabilities. Construct a replacement pipeline for bulk fuel transfer.

**Consistency:** The project is consistent with the 2005 Gustavus Strategic Plan and the DOT&PF Southeast Alaska Transportation Plan (SATP 2004).

#### A. Alternatives and major design features

**The Proposed Action would include:**

- Constructing a 1,100-foot by 28-foot steel-pile supported open-grate approach trestle.
- Constructing a 220-foot by 110-foot (0.6 acre of useable space) filled staging area near the dock entrance.

- Constructing a steel-pile supported grate-decked mooring dock incorporating a wave barrier to protect the transfer pontoon and floating dock.
- Installing six steel-pile lead-in and breasting dolphins.
- Allowing for installation of three breasting dolphins for barge use during construction.
- Constructing a pontoon-supported steel transfer bridge, ramp and apron.
- Constructing a new fuel-transfer pipeline for transferring fuel from barges to the onshore piping of the community tank farm.
- Re-locating existing small vessel mooring floats with new connections from the floats to the new pontoon, dock and trestle.

## B. Specific impacts of the project

### **Right-of -Way**

DOT&PF would enter into an Interagency Land Management Assignment (IMLA) with DNR for use and management of 1.4 acres of DNR-managed lands.

### **Social**

#### **Population/Neighborhoods and Community Cohesion**

- Not negatively affect neighborhoods or community cohesion
- Could have a positive effect.
- Remove the uncertainty about accessing Gustavus / provide a more positive future outlook
- Somewhat lower freight costs
- Lower the cost of living compared to the No Action alternative.
- Could result in slightly higher population growth than would occur otherwise.
- However, the trend in other Southeast Alaska communities that have AMHS ferry service has been a continued loss of population.
- Given the limited level of service anticipated, the improvements are not expected to result in substantial population growth in Gustavus.

#### **Travel Patterns and Accessibility**

- Capability to accommodate AMHS ferry service. For the purposes of the EA we assumed once weekly
- Some local traffic would be diverted to AMHS from air traffic
- or induced travel

With weekly service, a person from Gustavus could get to Juneau on one vessel trip and wait another week for the return trip. This would necessitate a week long stay at a hotel or other accommodations. A measureable increase in travel might be expected at ferry service levels of two to three trips per week (or more), making it possible for travelers to make two- to three-day ferry round-trips to Juneau.

**Motor Vehicles:**

- The socioeconomic analysis predicts that the AMHS ferry would transport about 400-500 vehicles annually (200-250 vehicles each way).
- Recreational Vehicle (RV) traffic to Gustavus is predicted to be between 25 and 45 visits (total) for the summer season with very few visits the remainder of the year.

Most vehicle traffic would be Gustavus residents taking vehicles to or from Juneau, with a small percentage of vehicles from out-of-town tourists or visitors. The availability of AMHS ferry service would not increase traffic above the carrying capacity of the road system,

**Marine Vessels:**

- Access to Gustavus by marine vessels would improve because the new facility would be able to handle larger, more efficient freight and passenger vessels, as well as AMHS service.
- Freight would no longer have to be transferred at the small, shallow, tidally-limited and inefficient facility on the Salmon River.

**Public Services**

There could be additional public service needs associated with an increase in pedestrian and vehicle travel to Gustavus:

- Public restrooms near the dock,
  - Increased demand for facilities for campers,
  - Visitor information services, and
  - Ground transportation to the National Park and airport.
- 
- Based on conditions seen at other Southeast Alaska communities with AMHS service, the improved transportation would not trigger rapid population growth or need for additional public services.
  - Most of the AMHS service would be current Gustavus residents, and there would not be much increase in demands on local facilities and services.
  - Some ferry-riders with cars and RVs that are not familiar with Gustavus might expect to find services such as campgrounds or RV waste disposal that are not available in Gustavus or the National Park.
  - The only public campground is located in the National Park and is a walk-in facility.
  - The National Park may need to expand camping facilities and accommodate RVs if the demand warranted it.
  - This type of visitor could also provide an opportunity for a private business to develop and operate an RV camping facility.

**Traffic Safety and Overall Public Safety**

- Proposed Action is not expected to change traffic safety on the roads in the community.
- Traffic flow and safety at the Gustavus Dock would be improved because the wider trestle would accommodate 2-way traffic, and vehicles dropping off or picking up vessel passengers could use the staging area.

- The number of vehicles loading or unloading from AMHS ferries during weekly summer visits is expected to be in the range of 10-20 vehicles, which would not exceed the carrying capacity of the road system in Gustavus or compromise public safety.
- The staging area located near the entrance of the dock would isolate ferry traffic from general dock operations to comply with MTSA security requirements.
- The safety of bicyclists and pedestrians on local roads would not change because of the projected low traffic increase.

### **Recreation/Tourism**

- Vessels less than 60 feet including sport fishing charters, commercial fishermen, recreational boaters and tour boat operators would continue to use the existing floats that would be relocated to the new facility.
- The relocated floats would be in deeper water
- Vessels over 60 feet would tie up to the new dock much as they do at the existing dock. The wider trestle would allow two-way traffic
- The staging area would make additional future uses possible, such as a vessel fueling facility and boat launch ramp.
- If future vessel fueling facilities are provided, some boats would use the dock facilities as an alternative to fueling at Bartlett Cove.
- Eliminate the current practice of fueling from portable tanks on trucks or carrying fuel to boats in containers.
- The addition of AMHS ferry service would improve access to recreational and tourist opportunities in Gustavus and the National Park for visitors from outside of Gustavus.
- The potential increase in numbers of visitors using the dock would be small in relation to the number of visitors using the dock during peak visitation in past years.

### **Visual Resources**

The new trestle and dock would have similar appearance and would have a fill area (in effect a small island) about 2/3 of the distance from shore to the dock. The new facility would be lighted only during freight or ferry loading operations. Lighting would be directed downward and offshore to limit visual impacts viewed from shore.

### **Subsistence**

- The Proposed Action would not adversely affect subsistence resources
- The addition of AMHS ferry service would make it more convenient for moose hunters from outside Gustavus
- But effects from additional competition would be limited because the hunt is strictly controlled in terms of the number of permits issued by ADF&G.

## **Economic**

### **Transportation and Shipping**

- Excluding vehicles, it is unlikely that general freight rates to Gustavus would decline substantially with AMHS service.
- It is unlikely that rates would be lower than current freight rates to Hoonah (which are not substantially lower than what Gustavus residents and businesses pay now).
- Some existing businesses currently using the Salmon River landing could be affected.
- The volume of freight transported to the community by landing craft (particularly vehicles) would likely be reduced if dock improvement allowed for better barge access and AMHS vessels.
- Cost of goods transported concurrently in vehicles would decrease dramatically.
- There could be a small decline in air taxi traffic. However, with once a week service at best, the number of travelers willing to forego the convenience of air travel for the opportunity to travel on the ferry is likely small.
- Improvements to the dock, and the addition of AMHS ferry service would be expected to have a positive impact on the level of visitation to Gustavus, which would be an economic benefit to the community given the recent downward trend in visitation.

### **Local Land Use and Transportation Plan**

The Proposed Action addresses the community's priority need in the 2005 Strategic Plan to improve marine transportation to Gustavus by replacing the Gustavus Dock with a facility that would support improved freight handling and be able to support future AMHS ferry service.

### **Historic Preservation**

The Proposed Action would not affect any known historic properties.

### **Wetlands**

The Proposed Action would not affect wetlands.

### **Fish and Wildlife**

#### **Anadromous and Resident Fish Streams**

- The Proposed Action would benefit salmon habitat in the nearby Salmon River.
- Would minimize freight traffic on the river and adverse impacts to salmon habitat.
- There would be a reduced risk of collisions and spills.

#### **Essential Fish Habitat**

##### **Staging Area Fill**

- Fill would be placed on 1.6 acres of silty/sandy intertidal habitat.
- Replace some of the sandy habitat covered by fill with rocky intertidal habitat.
- The fill would increase habitat diversity by providing an island with rocky intertidal habitat in a landscape dominated by silty/sandy tide flats.

- Rocky fill will be different from mudflat habitat,
- The National Park Service has agreed to monitor the fill in coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service if the Proposed Action is implemented.

#### **Trestle and Dock.**

- The new trestle and dock would be constructed from steel, which is environmentally preferable to the existing creosote structure.
- The old trestle and dock would be removed, eliminating ongoing toxic effects from approximately 200 creosote-treated wooden pilings and decking.
- Open grating would be used for the deck which will reduce shading of the seafloor compared to the existing solid-decked structures.

#### **Construction Activities**

Pile driving would temporarily displace marine species Temporary adverse impacts from habitat loss and construction impacts would be mitigated.

#### **Conservation Measures**

- Minimum size (0.6 acre useable area) of the offshore filled staging area
- The staging area is designed to minimize impacts to fish migration or sediment transport.
- To minimize disturbance to animals from pile driving, a vibratory hammer will be used for all piles installed, with impact-driving used only for final proofing of a few selected piles. A pile cushion will be used between the impact hammer and the piling to attenuate sound.
- As mitigation for potential construction impacts, this project will fund replacement of a set of culverts on Rink Creek Road that partially block fish migration

#### **Wildlife Resources**

The bulk of freight operations would shift from the Salmon River to the new dock, which would decrease disturbance to wildlife on the Salmon River.

#### **Bald Eagles**

There would be no impact on bald eagle nests from the Proposed Action.

#### **T&E Species**

The Proposed Action would not affect threatened or endangered species.

#### **Water Body Involvement**

- Replacement of trestle and dock pilings and dolphins
- Placement of 1.6 acres of fill for the staging area
- The new trestle and dock would be approximately the same size and configuration as the old timber dock that would be removed.

- The difference would be that the new facility would include the 1.6 acres of fill for the staging area.
- A reduction in use of the Salmon River landing for freight handling would reduce frequency of groundings and other environmental degradation on the river.

### **Alaska Coastal Management Program**

The Proposed Action is consistent with the Statewide Standards of the ACMP (11 AAC 112).

### **Hazardous Waste**

- The Proposed Action would remove the existing trestle and dock structure and dispose of the creosote-treated materials at an approved disposal facility.
- The contractor will be required to have a Hazardous Materials Control Plan (HMCP) for handling, storage, cleanup, and disposal of petroleum products and hazardous materials during construction.
- A fuel-transfer pipeline would be constructed on the new dock and trestle that would connect to the existing uplands fuel line connected to the community's tank farm, which could contain contaminated soils.
- The project would not include any construction between the shore and tank farm, so would not involve any contaminated sites.
- The potential for spills at the environmentally-sensitive Salmon River landing would be reduced as freight operations would be shifted to the Gustavus dock.

### **Air Quality**

Air pollution at the Salmon River landing would decrease as some activities shifted to the new dock.

### **Floodplain Impacts**

The proposed project is not located in a floodplain, and its construction would not cause adjacent land flooding.

### **Noise**

Additional vessels would use the new dock to deliver and receive freight and passengers. This would result in additional noise from vessel operations and freight handling equipment.

### **Water Quality**

Boat traffic and freight handling on the Salmon River would decrease, reducing water quality impacts from spills to the river.

### **Permits and Authorizations**

#### **Federal Agencies**

#### **U.S. Army Corps of Engineers**

Section 10 permit for work in navigable waters

Section 404 permit for discharge of fill

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

National Pollution Discharge Elimination System General Permit for Storm Water Discharge from Construction Activities

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultation

National Marine Fisheries Service

Endangered Species Act, Section 7 consultation  
Magnuson-Stevens Act (EFH) concurrence

**State of Alaska Agencies**

Department of Natural Resources – Division of Mining, Land and Water

Interagency Land Management Assignment to transfer additional tidelands from DNR to DOT&PF

Department of Natural Resources – Division of Coastal and Ocean Management

Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP) certification of consistency

Department of Natural Resources – State Historic Preservation Officer

National Historic Preservation Act, Section 106 consultation

Department of Environmental Conservation – Division of Water

Clean Water Act, Section 401 Certification of Reasonable Assurance

**Construction Impacts**

**Temporary Degradation of Water Quality**

**Temporary Degradation of Air Quality**

**Temporary Delays and Detours of Traffic**

The new facility would be constructed adjacent to the existing structures, so that the existing facility would be able to operate normally until the normal seasonal shutdown and final stages of construction when the existing floats would be relocated to the new dock.

**Other Construction Impacts, Including Noise**

**C. Procedures for receiving oral and written statements from the public**

- Written Comments (US mail, email, hand written comments at this meeting)
- Comments due by June 9, 2008
- Verbal Comments will be taken today

## **PUBLIC TESTIMONY**

The following is a transcription from the tape recording of verbal testimony presented at the hearing:

### **DAN ZOBRIST:**

My comment is really a question about the determination that freight rates will or won't be significantly reduced? Is the backup information available to the community? The criteria used is because freight rates in Hoonah and freight rates in Gustavus are somehow currently comparable. Even though Hoonah has twice the population of Gustavus, and that really says quite a bit about the lowered freight rates in Gustavus, and efforts that the folks have to lower that rate. It occurs to me that if a vendor was able to provide freight to Hoonah and Gustavus using the same mode of transportation, that it might lower the cost in both communities. The effect might very well be lower freight rates in Gustavus as a result of having a facility there that would be similar to a facility in Hoonah or Pelican. I'd like to see back-up information for that.

### **Jane D. Gendron:**

The EA has the report prepared by McDowell, in the appendices available to you. I will provide your comment to McDowell and ask them to confirm if they considered that as a possibility in their analysis.

### **Dan Zobrist:**

If you're looking at shared capital cost and a shared variable cost, certainly the capital cost is shared between the 2 communities and the variable cost of getting at least to Icy Straight and back is shared. So the only marginal cost would be from Hoonah to Gustavus and back to Hoonah. That would be the only additional cost of bringing the freight here. There would be great opportunities to lower the freight rates for both communities.

### **TIM GIBSON:**

Every time I look at these drawings they are a little bit different than the last one. I know it's an on going process. I'm concerned with the future barge landing on the drawings because it is in extremely shallow water, where it seems to be located on the drawings. We deal with freight all the time and I bring barges up the river so I am pretty familiar with what is required there. Our hope was when this staging area was built and this barge landing was built, we could access it on the greater tide ranges. Where it is located on the drawing I don't think its going to make that much difference. It's too far in, too shallow. This a great concern of mine.

### **Jane D. Gendron:**

I'm not sure what is available regarding the percentage to time as compared to what is available on the Salmon River. It's an interesting data point to know.

### **Tim Gibson:**

The mainline barge services aren't going to pull into it at all because they won't run the risk of running aground. They get in and get out and they won't wait. Time is money. It needs to be pushed out to deeper water.

**GREG STREVELER:**

A follow-up on something Tim said from an environmental point of view; the riprap platform is at mid-tide basically. Most of the advantage of it for wildlife is going to be at low tide. Barnacles and Mussels we know will grow there, and this will help a little. I have one specific request. A dock like this is a lot less bird-friendly than the dock we've got. The eagles don't like to land on plastic cones; especially those 3 dolphins that are off-shore of the barge landing. I would like to ask that you figure a way of capping those so that an eagle could perch on them. To the extent that good habitat is available now, the eagles are going to want to use it. It is really nice for the tourists and residents to see the eagles out there. Also it will allow them to access that new habitat.

## SUMMARY OF COMMENTS AND RESPONSES on the EA

### Diane Klawunder (May 26, 2008)

1. Any negative effects of the proposed project would be far outweighed by the severe economic impacts resulting from the eventual closure of the dock (no action alternative).
2. The project would benefit the environment by removing old creosote pilings, building a safer fuel transfer line, moving noise from existing freight handling at the Salmon River farther from residences, and reducing barge traffic on the Salmon River.
3. Support the EA conclusion that ferry service would not create problems with too many additional RVs. AMHS service would benefit tourism by providing an additional option to flying to Gustavus.
4. The EA underestimates the potential reduction in freight costs from the proposed action; especially in light of escalating fuel prices. AMHS service would provide the best chance to lower freight prices in Gustavus.

Response: Section 4.4.2 states that even with the addition of AMHS service the overall cost of freight would not decline substantially, although the cost of goods transported concurrently in vehicles would decrease dramatically. It is difficult to accurately predict future transportation costs, but especially considering the rising cost of fuel, the proposed action would result in reduced cost of freight and goods compared with no action.

### Dan Zobrist (oral testimony at May 28, 2008 hearing)

Regarding whether freight rates would be reduced significantly; is the backup information available to the community? The analysis concludes that freight rates in Gustavus would likely be about the same as Hoonah. If a vendor was able to provide service using the same mode of transportation with a combined delivery to both communities the shared capital and variable cost could result in more affordable freight rates to both communities.

Response: The backup material is presented in Appendix B of the EA. We will provide this comment to our consultant (McDowell Group) and ask them if this was considered in their analysis.

### Tim Gibson (oral testimony at May 28, 2008 hearing)

I'm concerned with the location of the future barge landing on the drawings because it is in extremely shallow water. I bring barges up the Salmon River. I hoped the new barge landing would be more useable at the new facility at greater tide ranges. The current location is too shallow to make much of an improvement.

## Summary of Comments and Responses

Response: Typical mainline barges and shallow-draft ramp barges could use the dock as well as a future barge ramp. As proposed, typical barges like those used by AML in Hoonah and Excursion Inlet would have sufficient depth to unload and load for 4-6 hours compared to 2-4 hours in the Salmon River at typical tides. Based on geotechnical analysis the filled staging area could not be moved farther offshore because the weight of the fill could cause the bottom to slide down-slope. Engineering solutions to this problem were considered not to be cost-effective.

### Greg Streveler (oral testimony at May 28, 2008 hearing)

The staging area rip rap is in mid-tide which would be used by barnacles and mussels. The proposed structure would be less bird-friendly than the existing structure. Eagles perch on the existing pilings and dolphins, and viewing these eagles is enjoyed by tourists and local. I would like to see the new dolphins and pilings capped so that eagles could perch on them.

Response: The only "free headed" pilings on the dock facility will have flat steel plates that shouldn't preclude perching by birds.

### City of Gustavus (June 5, 2008)

1. The EA identifies the need to address problems with trash, lack of restrooms, and improving law enforcement and emergency response. The City has identified these needs in the Gustavus Strategic Plan 2005 and recognizes it has the responsibility, jurisdiction and means to address them. The FONSI should reflect this.

Response: The following sentence was added at the end of Section 4.3.2.3 Public Services: *The needs for restrooms, trash management, and improving law enforcement and emergency response are identified in the Gustavus Strategic Plan 2005. The City of Gustavus has jurisdiction and intends to provide these services.*

2. The EA identifies possible future needs for a campground, a facility for RVs should that be an issue, tour guides and ground transportation. We feel those concerns are best addressed by private enterprise, and would be considered economic benefits from the project.

Response: Section 4.3.2.3 Public Services, was modified to state: *The potential need to provide expanded camping and RV facilities would be addressed by private enterprise, and would be considered economic benefits to the community.*

3. The project would remove the existing bulk fuel line located on the dock and trestle and replace it with a new one on the new facility. Ownership of the new

## Summary of Comments and Responses

fuel line would be transferred to the current owner, Gustavus Dray. Since the existing tank farm owned by Gustavus Dray is slated to be replaced with a new bulk fuel facility owned by the City, we recommend that ownership of the new line be transferred instead to the City. This would create a single fuel delivery/storage system that the City can lease to fuel distributors without the complication of multiple ownerships.

Response: DOT&PF would replace the fuel line on the dock and trestle that is owned by Gustavus Dray. The City would need to negotiate ownership of the replacement fuel line with Gustavus Dray as part of the new bulk fuel facility that would be owned by the City.

4. The City appreciates the offshore staging area being designed to accommodate a future permanent barge landing. The City intends to pursue funding to construct a permanent barge landing at the site and would appreciate DOT&PF providing a materials list to help develop a funding proposal.

Response: DOT&PF will provide information to the City regarding materials needed if the City decides to construct a future permanent barge landing at the staging area.

5. The City is concerned that creosote timbers, piles and planks removed during demolition of the existing dock would not be properly disposed of by the contractor, and would end up being sold or used in the community. We want assurance that the materials may not be resold or dispersed into the community in any way. Note that the City of Gustavus does not have a facility capable of handling such materials.

Response: As stated in Section 4.12.2 creosote-treated materials would be disposed of at an approved waste disposal facility. DOT&PF will include this requirement in the construction contract. We are aware that no such facility exists in Gustavus, and anticipate that such demolition and construction wastes will be barged to an approved disposal facility outside of Alaska.

### National Park Service (June 5, 2008)

1. The EA assumes that the new dock would bring Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) ferry service to Gustavus. It would be preferable for the Environmental Assessment (EA) to consider the new dock as allowing for the possibility of having AMHS service rather than necessarily resulting in AMHS service.

Response: The Proposed Action does not include bringing AMHS service to Gustavus. However, the project would be constructed to allow for AMHS service in the future if user demand warrants and funding becomes available. Providing the capability for AMHS service is included in the

## Summary of Comments and Responses

purpose and need for the proposed action. Bringing AMHS service to Gustavus is not proposed at this time.

2. The EA identifies the potential need for additional campground and RV facilities if AMHS service becomes a reality. The construction of such a campground is not consistent with the Comprehensive Development Plan for this area.

Response: Section 4.3.2.3 Public Services, was modified to state: *The potential need to provide expanded camping and RV facilities would be addressed by private enterprise, and would be considered economic benefits to the community.*

3. In Section 4.8.2.2 under “Staging Area Fill”, there is a statement that the National Park Service (NPS) has agreed to monitor the rocky intertidal habitat created by the fill. NPS is eager to cooperate with this project, but the details of the monitoring program need to be worked out soon and a written monitoring plan developed.

Response: DOT&PF will move quickly to work with NPS staff to develop a monitoring plan that is consistent with existing NPS intertidal habitat inventory and monitoring protocols for Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

### Juneau and Fish & Wildlife Field Office (June 5, 2005 email from Richard Enriquez)

The Juneau Fish & Wildlife Field Office (JFWFO) appreciates the measures proposed to avoid, minimize and compensate for impacts to the environment. The inclusion of Best Management Practices and mitigation sequencing, including the replacement of 4 culverts in Rink Creek are supported by the JFWFO.

Response: Comment appreciated.

### Morgan DeBoer (June 9, 2008 phone message)

In a voice mail message Mr. DeBoer stated a concern about orientation of future barge ramp off the ‘SW’ portion of the staging area and mentioned Southwesterly storms that can occur at the site. He stated a preference for the future barge landing to be located on the ‘SE’ side and expressed questions/concern about deposition from river.

Response:

Orientation of barge ramp. Orientation of a construction barge landing and a future barge ramp off of the staging area was shown in the November public meeting graphic as being off of the ‘SE’ side. Comments received at the November meeting expressed the desire to have the construction barge landing

## Summary of Comments and Responses

(and potential future barge ramp) off of the 'SW' side due to conflicts with barge traffic and the floats and anchorages/moorings that are also on the 'SE' side. DOT&PF concluded that future barge visits would occur at a maximum of monthly (for four to six hours of duration between tides) and that barge traffic disruption to float and anchorages/moorings would be serious. These concerns outweighed exposure of barges on the 'SW' side.

Southwesterly storms are factored into the design; including the wave barrier (to protect the transfer pontoon) and the staging area riprap layout (Class IV on SW/NW exposures and Class III on SE/NE exposures). The likelihood of a storm occurring during a barge visit is small and acceptable compared to the continual conflicts/disruption of barge traffic on the same side as the floats and moorings/anchorages.

Potential sediment deposition. Location and sizing of the staging area island take into consideration the water depth, currents and littoral drift. The staging area island is located deep enough to allow fish migration throughout the range of tides. Salmon River sediment deposition is occurring most rapidly toward the SW which is away from the site. Any shoaling or scour from littoral drift/currents or storms will be seasonal and at mid- to high tide range and would be minor near the staging area island.

May 26, 2008

Mr. Carl Schrader  
Project Environmental Coordinator  
DOT & PF  
6860 Glacier Highway  
P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, Ak. 99811-2506

ALASKA DOT & PF  
SOUTHEAST REGION

MAY 29 2008

PRELIMINARY DESIGN & ENVIRONMENTAL

RE: Gustavus Causeway Placement  
Environmental Assessment  
Project #67599

Mr. Schrader,

Again, thanks to the people at DOT who have worked on this project and have supplied this opportunity for public comment.

After reading the thorough environmental assessment document it is very evident that the "no action" option would negatively affect the entire economy of Gustavus. Any negative impact this project would have, and there were few, would be far outweighed by the severe consequences of the final closure of the dock. The charter industry would not have a place to carry on commerce, our fuel would have to be delivered up the Salmon River and the Salmon River estuary would be threatened with the increase in freight and fuel delivery.

The new structure would be a win/win for the environment. Old creosote piling would be removed, a safe fuel transfer line would be built, the noise from freight delivery would be moved further away from residences and the Salmon River estuary will benefit from less barge traffic.

The environmental assessment should alleviate some of the fears expressed concerning RV traffic with ferry service. Tourists will rarely consider putting an RV on a ferry to come to Gustavus with infrequent service not to mention soaring fuel costs and ferry fares just to get an RV to Juneau. We can only hope that our tourism industry will be buoyed by the option of having the choice to ride the ferry from Juneau and Hoonah to Gustavus, rather than flying both directions.

Although your assessment shows that our freight rates may not decline significantly, even a small drop in rates will assist struggling businesses and residents. This assessment also did not take into consideration the continuing, almost daily escalation in the price of oil. Having access to the State owned AMHS service will probably offer the best chance in lowering freight prices for Gustavus.

Therefore, I totally support the replacement of the Gustavus Causeway as a means ensuring that the economy of Gustavus survives.

Sincerely,



Diane Klawunder  
P.O. Box 156  
Gustavus, Ak. 99826



**City of Gustavus**  
P.O. Box 1  
Gustavus, AK 99826  
Phone: (907) 697-2451

ALASKA DOT & PF  
SOUTHEAST REGION

JUN 06 2008

June 4th, 2008

Mr. Carl Schrader  
Project Environmental Coordinator  
State of Alaska  
Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
6860 Glacier Highway  
P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, Alaska 99811-2506

PRELIMINARY DESIGN & ENVIRONMENTAL

RE: Gustavus Causeway Replacement Environmental Assessment – Project #67599

Dear Mr. Schrader:

Foremost, the Gustavus City Council wishes to extend a big thanks to you and the excellent staff at Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for being so attentive to community input throughout this public process. Your crew has conducted a very open, participatory and professional process, one that will result in a project that best suites the needs of Gustavus. We note that following the open house on June 12, 2007, your staff significantly redesigned the project in response to public and agency input, adding an offshore staging area and extending the entire facility 25 feet further seaward to improve low tide water depth, then following the November 5, 2007 meeting responded to other input and fine tuned the staging area further. These redesigns address significant concerns and will result in a more effective facility for the long term. Other issues of concern to the community, such as appropriate lighting, have likewise been addressed. Admittedly, the facility cannot be built to everybody's liking, but through this process all concerns have been aired and within the constraints of the project purpose and need, the best facility will emerge.

Perhaps the most significant decision made during this NEPA process was the determination to conduct an environmental assessment rather than a categorical exclusion, based on the need for a socioeconomic analysis. Upon review we feel the study compiled by the McDowell Group is thorough and quite adequately captures the social and economic attributes of Gustavus. Again, we don't expect the study to satisfy everybody's expectations, but we note that it does a more thorough job of capturing the essence of the Gustavus community than we have seen in other federal agency NEPA studies done of late. In fact, it is comprehensive enough that it assembles valuable baseline information that might be useful in other areas, and identifies information gaps that need filling. Furthermore, had this study not been done there would have been

lingering doubts about, and 'what if's', associated with the project. This study helps to address those concerns and lay them to rest, as best as can be expected. Again, your agency and the McDowell Group are to be commended.

We offer these comments on the Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project Environmental Assessment:

- The McDowell Group study and several Gustavus commentators identify concerns about the project effects to adjacent uplands – specifically trash, a need for restrooms, law enforcement and emergency response. The City of Gustavus has likewise identified similar concerns through a separate planning process (Gustavus Strategic Plan 2005), and recognizes it has the responsibility, jurisdiction and means to address them. The FONSI should reflect this.
- The EA identifies possible future needs for a campground, a facility for RVs should that become an issue, tour guides and ground transportation. We feel those concerns are best addressed by private enterprise, and would be considered economic benefits derived from the project.
- At the public meeting on May 28 in Gustavus Mr. Vic Winters stated that the old fuel line on the existing dock would be removed and a new one placed on the new dock, and ownership of the new line would be transferred to the owner of the current fuel line (Gustavus Dray). However, since the existing tank farm owned by Gustavus Dray is slated to be decommissioned and removed, to be replaced by a new bulk fuel storage facility owned by the City, we recommend that ownership of the new fuel line instead be transferred to the City. This will create a single fuel delivery/storage system that the City can then lease to the fuel distributor(s) without creating issues of multiple ownership.
- We note that the off-shore staging area is designed so it can be adapted to become a ramp barge landing in the future through separate project funding to be pursued by the City. This is an outstanding benefit to the community, as it will provide a ramp barge landing that is accessible during all high tides - more than a 200% increase in opportunity over the current situation. Since this future potential development is being permitted under this action we presume Alaska DOT engineers have a solid idea of the material requirements for that project. The City of Gustavus would like to request, if feasible and appropriate, that Alaska DOT provide a materials list to help us prepare funding proposals for that future project.

Thanks again to all in your agency for making this project a priority and moving it forward. We look forward to working with you to completion.

Sincerely,



City of Gustavus

Ken Klawunder Mayor

## Schrader, Carl (DOT)

---

**From:** Ken Klawunder [CityCouncil3@gustavus-ak.gov]  
**Sent:** Friday, June 06, 2008 10:19 AM  
**To:** Schrader, Carl (DOT); Gendron, Jane D (DOT)  
**Cc:** Kapryce Manchester  
**Subject:** An addition to the Comments to the Environmental Assessment

Dear Carl and Jane,

The City of Gustavus has an addition to the already submitted comments to the Gustavus Causeway EA. Please see below;

Ms. Jane Gendron stated at the public meeting in Gustavus on May 28 that the creosote timbers, pile and planks from the old dock would be removed to an approved disposal facility in an upland setting. Yet we have had experience here when that did not happen. For example, when the old dock at Bartlett Cove was dismantled several years ago we saw much of the remains of that facility end up in Gustavus. I believe the way that happened is that the contractor became owner of the material once it was removed, and the contractor chose to sell it in Gustavus. Some of that material still resides as debris on the beach in the Salmon River. We would like specific assurance at some point in this process that the material may not be resold or dispersed into the community in any way.

Also, we were told that the material would be deposited in an approved upland disposal facility. Please be advised that the Gustavus Disposal and Recycling Center does not have the capacity to store that volume of material, so it will have to be taken out of the community.---

Sincerely

Ken Klawunder - Mayor



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Glacier Bay Field Station  
3100 National Park Road  
Juneau, Alaska 99801



Tel: 907-364-2622 · Fax: 907-364-1540

IN REPLY REFER TO:

L76

June 5, 2008

Mr. Carl Schrader  
Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
P.O. Box 112506  
Juneau, AK 99811-2506

Dear Mr. Schrader,

The National Park Service is eager to cooperate with the Alaska Department of Transportation and the residents of Gustavus to facilitate the Gustavus Causeway Replacement project. Thank you for preparing the Environmental Assessment so this important project can move forward.

The initial sections of the Environmental Assessment assume that the new dock would necessarily bring the Alaska Marine Highway System (AMHS) service to Gustavus. Given the scope of this Environmental Assessment, it would be preferable for this document to consider the new dock as allowing for the possibility of having AMHS service rather than necessarily resulting in AMHS service.

The Environmental Assessment projects that the AMHS would bring 25 to 45 recreational vehicles to Gustavus annually and speculates that the NPS or a private entity would need to establish a campground suitable for RV use. The construction of such a campground in the Bartlett Cove area is not consistent with the Comprehensive Development Plan for this area. If such a facility is needed, there would be an opportunity for a private enterprise in Gustavus to accommodate the need.

In section 4.8.2.2 under "Staging Area Fill", there is a statement that the National Park Service has agreed to monitor the rocky intertidal habitat created by constructing an island staging area in coordination with the National Marine Fisheries Service. The Park is eager to cooperate in the execution of this project, but the details of an inventory and monitoring program for this site have yet to be worked out. I recommend that representatives of the DOT and NPS move quickly to agree on a written monitoring plan.

I have also forwarded an electronic copy of the Environmental Assessment with comments and suggested revisions. Please consider these to be informal comments from NPS staff intended for the improvement of the document, rather than as formal comments from the National Park Service.

Sincerely,

Cherry Payne  
Superintendent



**Schrader, Carl (DOT)**

---

**From:** Richard\_Enriquez@fws.gov  
**Sent:** Thursday, June 05, 2008 3:16 PM  
**To:** Schrader, Carl (DOT)  
**Subject:** Environmental Assessment - Gustavus Causeway Replacement Project # 67599

Carl:

The Juneau Fish & Wildlife Field Office (JFWFO) has reviewed the subject project described in the Environmental Assessment (EA), dated May 13, 2008. The JFWFO appreciates the efforts that ADOT has taken to avoid, minimize, and compensate for impacts to the environment. The inclusion of BMPs and mitigation sequencing including the replacement of 4 culverts in Ring Creek are supported by the JFWFO. We have no further comments.

If you have any questions, please contact me by reply email, or at (907) 780-1162.  
Please notify this office of your decision on this project.

Richard Enriquez  
Conservation Planning Assistance Biologist  
Juneau Fish and Wildlife Field Office  
3000 Vintage Blvd. #201  
Juneau, AK 99801-7100

# **APPENDIX C**

## **Environmental Commitments List**

## **Environmental Commitments**

The following environmental commitments are incorporated into the design and construction of the project to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts to important and protected resources:

- The 0.6 acre offshore securable staging area is the minimum size needed for staging ferry vehicle traffic, parking, diesel generator, and minimizing conflicts with traffic on the trestle.
- The staging area is designed to be far enough from shore (about 500 ft from the high tide line) to minimize potential adverse impacts to fish migration or littoral sediment transport.
- Riprap placed to stabilize the offshore staging area will be monitored to assess habitat value for marine fish and other species.
- The trestle and dock will be constructed of steel piling and grating which has low toxicity from leaching in the marine environment.
- Over 200 creosote-treated pilings with known toxicity to aquatic organisms will be removed.
- To minimize disturbance to fish and marine mammals from pile driving, a vibratory hammer will be used for all piles installed, with impact-driving used only for final proofing of a few selected piles. A pile cushion will be used between the impact hammer and the piling to attenuate sound.
- A marine mammal monitor will be assigned to the project during pile driving operations. If marine mammals are observed in the project area operations will cease until the animal leaves the area.
- As mitigation for potential construction impacts, this project will fund replacement of a set of culverts on Rink Creek Road that partially obstructs access to approximately one-half mile of stream and 10 acres of pond rearing habitat for coho salmon and Dolly Varden char.
- The project contract specifications will include special conditions for implementation and maintenance of Best Management Practices during construction including a Storm Water Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP), Spill Prevention and Control and Countermeasure Plan (SPCCP), and Hazardous Materials Control Plan (HMCP) to minimize impacts to water quality.

# **APPENDIX D**

## **Circulation List**

## Circulation List

The following individuals and agencies were provided copies of the EA and were notified of revisions to the EA:

Steve Brockman, Acting Field Supervisor, US Fish and Wildlife Service, Juneau  
Doug Mecum, Acting Regional Administrator, NMFS, Juneau  
Cherry Payne, Superintendent, Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve  
Jennifer Curtis, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Anchorage  
John Leeds, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Juneau  
Jackie Timothy, Department of Natural Resources-OHMP, Juneau  
Claire Batac, Department of Natural Resources-DCOM, Juneau  
Judith Bittner, State Historic Preservation Officer, DNR, Anchorage  
Bruce Wanstall, Department of Environmental Conservation, Juneau  
Allison Banks, P.O. Box 237, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Morgan DeBoer, P.O. Box 51, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Kim and Melanie Heacox, P.O. Box 359, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Denise and Jim Healey, P.O. Box 7, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Ken and Diane Klawunder, P.O. Box 156, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Robert Millard, P.O. Box 210923, Auke Bay, AK 99821-0923  
Kim Ney and Wayne Howell, P.O. Box 32, Gustavus AK 99826  
Charles Piedra and Jan Conitz, 619 W. 11<sup>th</sup> St., Juneau, AK 99801  
Greg Streveler, P.O. Box 94, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Marilyn and Allen Trump, P.O. Box 222, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Pedr Turner, P.O. Box 217, Gustavus, AK 99826  
Dan Zobrist and Carolyn Edelman, P.O. Box 176, Gustavus AK 99826