

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE LES GARA

February 19, 2014

Governor Sean Parnell
P.O. Box 110001
Juneau, AK 99811-0001

Mark Foster, Chairman
Knik Arm Bridge & Toll Authority
820 E. 15th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Governor Parnell and Mr. Foster:

I am writing because the Knik Arm Bridge and Toll Authority has been spending public funds – over \$50,000 in the past 3 years – to advertise and promote the Knik Arm Bridge to the public. That project has not received legislative approval or funding of the project, and remains highly controversial with the public and legislators. This is improper for a few reasons.

First, we are in tight fiscal times. Second, state government should not use scarce public funds on one-sided information to push the public to support a \$680,000,000+ project (assuming no cost overruns) that still awaits a legislative decision.

Debate over this project is proper. Spending public money to lobby the public, in the general media on outlets such as Alaska Public Radio, where KABATA has been running advertisements to promote the project, is not.

I would ask that no further public funds be used to purchase general media advertisements promoting this project until it is fully approved by the Legislature. With a deficit of roughly \$1 billion or more, and dwindling savings accounts and oil production (projected by the state to fall by 45% over the next 10 years), the Legislature may decide this project is not a priority over reversing cuts in public education, or other priorities. This bridge will not cut any commute time to the Palmer-Wasilla area (KABATA's own studies show that a bridge, and connecting

highways will not cut the commute time from Anchorage to either Palmer or Wasilla), and may not rank above other core functions the public would prefer.

Thank you.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Les Gara", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Rep. Les Gara