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September 3, 2023

State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Program Development, Attn. STIP
PO Box 112500
Juneau, AK 99811
Submitted via email to dot.stip@alaska.gov

Re: Draft 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP) open for public comment

To Whom It May Concern:

The Alaska Miners Association (AMA) writes to comment on the Draft 2024-2027 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP), and in particular, in support of the West Susitna Access Road (STIP Project 34206).

AMA is a professional membership trade organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry in Alaska. We are composed of more than 1,400 members that come from eight statewide branches: Anchorage, Denali, Fairbanks, Haines, Juneau, Kenai, Ketchikan/Prince of Wales, and Nome. Our members include individual prospectors, geologists, engineers, suction dredge miners, small family mines, junior mining companies, and major mining companies, Alaska Native Corporations, and the contracting sector that supports Alaska's mining industry.

Access to resources is one of Alaska's largest challenges across our vast state. Lack of infrastructure, particularly roads, is a significant barrier to new resource and economic development opportunities to benefit our state, communities, and residents. It is often said that were many of Alaska's mineral deposits located in Nevada, adjacent to roads, affordable power, and other infrastructure, they would already be operating mines.

To communicate what is needed to facilitate ongoing and increased mineral activity in Alaska, AMA adopts and publishes an annual State Issues of Concern to Alaska's Mining Industry document. Three key policies that exist in 2023 [document](#) that relate to the 2024-2027 Draft STIP are as follows:

- Support infrastructure projects that leverage responsible resource development to sustain and grow the State's economy including utilizing AIDEA as an investment vehicle.
- Oppose any proposed State or Federal policies that are designed to elevate one resource over another and recognize that established policies have proven that Alaska mining projects successfully co-exist with the natural environment and other industries.
- Pursue and defend guaranteed access, including RS2477s, for all uses across all State and federal lands within Alaska.



Within the STIP is a proposal to construct the West Susitna Access Road, a 15-20 public road to provide Alaskans with improved access to important state lands in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the fastest growing region of Alaska. The current proposal includes a bridge across the Susitna River to establish a kay launch point for further access to the area. While there are certainly important mineral exploration projects in the area, and immense mineralization that could be explored in the future, access to the area would benefit industries far beyond mining. The State of Alaska, the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, and commissioned studies by the McKinley Research Group have concluded that the state's economy will enjoy growth from oil and gas activity, agriculture, timber harvest, alternative energies, and more. More, what is a cornerstone of Alaskans' lifestyles and passions for our state is the significant increase in outdoor hunting, fishing, and other recreational opportunities that new access will provide. For these reasons, AMA wishes to express its emphatic support for the West Susitna Access Project in the Draft 2024-2027 STIP.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "DSK", is positioned above the typed name.

Deantha Skibinski
Executive Director