

Essert, Sue Ellen

From: J Welch [rrjwelch@ptialaska.net]
Sent: Tuesday, July 06, 2004 5:36 PM
To: assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us
Subject: Resolution 2004-051

Please submit this email as testimony for Resolution 2004-051.

I fully support Resolution 2004-051 recommending that the Sterling Highway between Anchor Point and Skilak Lake be designated as a scenic byway.

Whenever we travel in the Lower '48, we purposely select scenic byways to travel cross country. In our youth we traveled interstates from NE Pennsylvania to Alaska via Montana, Wyoming, the Dakotas, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Louisiana, Texas, etc. What a boring, uninteresting, and tiresome way to travel. Now we choose to drive the two-lane scenic byways when traveling across the country. It is much more enjoyable, not as crowded, and the sights are so much more interesting than the blah lands along an interstate.

We often fly into some northeast city, rent a car and travel eight to fourteen hours one way to NE Pennsylvania and central New York State to visit family. In 2002 we landed in Chicago and took scenic byways to Akron, OH where we covered the last couple hours to a friend's house by interstate. We met some great people, saw some beautiful country, and purchased farm-fresh peaches and sweet corn from a farmer along the way. On the return trip we selected a different route, saw some more wonderful country, met some great people, and purchased more fresh produce directly from local farmers along the way.

Last year we visited 25 states and 4 Canadian provinces on a motorcycle, driving mostly on two-lane roads and sought out the scenic byways. In some places we were forced to travel interstates for short distances, but we traveled most of the 13,700 miles on uncrowded two-lane roads and scenic byways through awesome country. We were even able to bypass Baltimore, MD and Washington, DC on very scenic two-lane roads.

Some suspect that a scenic byway designation may prohibit signage for businesses along the road. This is not true. There are still signs everywhere for food, entertainment, towns, businesses, etc. along scenic byways. At times, while traveling in the East coast, there are so many signs that we wish other states had laws which limited signage along highways, as Alaska does. According to the www.byways.org website, signage is governed by local government units (for more information see <http://www.bywaysonline.org/designation/restrictions.html>).

Within Alaska, we have traveled every road designated as a scenic byway except the Alaska Railroad and the Dalton Highway. We lived on the Alaska Highway (Mile 1416) for 22 years. Those friends, acquaintances, and businesses along Alaska's scenic byways or those located in the Lower '48 never once complained that their road's designation as a scenic byway created inconveniences for them. Therefore, I conclude that being designated as a scenic byway must not be detrimental to business or normal living along that route.

I strongly believe that if the rest of the Sterling Highway is designated as a scenic byway, there will be more opportunities to seek grant funding for rest area maintenance, additional traveler amenities such as

toilets, maintenance pull-overs, signage explaining historical sites, etc.

Respectfully
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