

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

**From:** Casey Planning & Design [caseys@alaska.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 23, 2004 9:00 AM  
**To:** 'Alaskan Serenity B&B'; 'Alaskan Sourdough B&B'; 'Bluff House B&B'; 'Call of the River B&B'; 'Casperhouse B&B'; 'Catch of the Kenai Lodge'; 'Deal's Den'; 'Gulls Landing B&B'; 'Ingrid's Inn B&B'; 'Kenai River B&B'; 'Longmere Lake Lodge B&B'; 'Posey's Kenai River Hideaway B&B'; 'Salmon Haus'; 'Snug Harbor B&B'; 'The Sterling Needle B&B'; 'Upper Kenai River Inn'; 'Alaskan Angler RV Resort'; 'Anna Johnson'; 'Aud Walaszek'; 'Bill Holloway'; 'Birch Ridge Golf Course'; 'Bob Baldwin'; 'Bonnie Golden'; 'Brandii O'Reagan'; bruce@niniichiktribe-nsn.gov; 'CARTS Jennifer Beckmann'; CIRI; 'Cooper Landing Chamber of Commerce'; 'Cooper Landing Community Club'; 'David Rhode'; 'Dee Gaddis'; Deland Erich; 'Discover Alaska's Kenai Peninsula'; 'Gary Davis'; Gayle Udelhoven; 'George Heim'; Isaak, James; 'Jack Blackwell'; 'Jack Brown'; 'Jack Sinclair'; 'Janet Swanson'; 'Jeanne Camp'; 'Jillian Simpson'; Joanne Collins; 'John Parker'; 'Karen McCarty'; 'Lacey Eckberg'; 'Larry Marsh'; 'Laura Kroto'; 'Linda Heath'; 'Linda Murphy'; Maria Sweppy; 'Marion Nelson'; Marnie Nelson; 'Max Best'; 'Michelle Glass'; 'Mike Odegard'; 'Milli Martin'; Oskolkoff Gary; Patti Heim; 'Paul Carter'; 'Rebecca Sorenson'; 'Ricky Gease'; Roark Brown; 'Robert Ruffner'; 'Robin West'; Roger Covey; Salamatof; Schuster Mike; seniors@ptialaska.net; 'Shanon Hamrick'; 'Steve Anderson'; 'Sue Isham'; Wagoner Thomas; 'William Kent'; Williams Krystina; Wolf Kelly  
**Subject:** Last Chance- Sterling Highway State Byway Designation

Hello Sterling Highway Stakeholders,

Last week the Assembly voted 4-4 to defeat the **Resolution to support designation of the Sterling Highway as a State Scenic Byway**. On Sept. 7, the Assembly will vote to reconsider that vote, and there is still a chance to pass the Resolution. Although there will be no more public testimony allowed for this item, supporters can email their statements of support to the Assembly Clerk and they will be included in their information packet, if received by end of day Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>. Even if you have already pledged your support, an additional note would make a difference with the Assembly.

Designation of the Highway as a State Scenic Byway provides marketing and signage for the Highway. It also allows us to start working with communities along the Highway corridor to develop a plan for future recreation access improvements and use that plan to apply for National Byway designation. There are no new regulations associated with any Byway designation. National Byway designation is a recognition program for outstanding American Highways that opens the door to millions of dollars of matching grant money for Byway improvements and world wide marketing of the Sterling Highway corridor.

If you have ANY questions about the Byway programs, please call or email me. If not, **please take a moment to write a quick note of support for the Sterling Highway State Byway nomination project and submit it by the end of day Wednesday, August 25<sup>th</sup>.**

Send emails to [assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us](mailto:assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us)

Sincerely,

**Nancy J. Casey**

CASEY PLANNING & DESIGN  
 P.O. Box 57  
 Kenai, AK 99611  
 907-260-8418  
[caseys@alaska.net](mailto:caseys@alaska.net)

RECEIVED  
 2004 AUG 24 AM 9:02  
 KPB  
 CLERK'S OFFICE

08/24/04

RECEIVED

2004 AUG 24 AM 9:02

KPB  
CLERK'S OFFICE

549 E Caribou  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
23 August 2004

Dear Assembly Member:

You will soon decide whether to permit scenic highway status to the Sterling Highway. As past president of the Glenn Highway Scenic Byway partnership board, I am asked to comment on our experience.

We spent several months speaking with residents, business, and users along the Glenn Highway before we filed for the Scenic Byway designation. There was plenty of concern of how government recognition would impact stakeholders, and in fact the Glennallen residents initially chose not to be part of it. As general manager of the Alaska State Fair—a private corporation—I shared many of those concerns. However, the experience has not been detrimental.

No regulation comes along with the recognition of scenic highway, nor is it susceptible for special interest groups to push their agendas. Designation quite simply makes people proud to live along and drive the byway, and federal and local resources have appeared to enhance that experience. It has been a positive experience along our highway, and we see substantial pressure to include roads that are not currently designated.

Opposition to the Glenn Highway designation has evaporated so far as I can tell.

As a Cook Inlet drifter from 1965-83 I am familiar not only with every curve and vista of the Sterling Highway, but with the hearts and minds of the folks who use her. There is no aspect of scenic highway designation that makes me feel uneasy about including the Sterling.

Sincerely yours,

Joe Lawton  
746-7150 (State Fair direct #)

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** Alaska River Adventures [heim@arctic.net]  
**Sent:** Monday, August 23, 2004 5:08 PM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Scenic Highway designation

To all Borough Members:

Please reconsider your recent vote on the Scenic Highway designation for the Sterling Highway. This is one of the best and most scenic drives in Alaska and designation as such will be a big help to those of us in Cooper Landing as we try to create a secure economic base in our community.

Sincerely,  
George Heim  
Cooper Landing resident and business owner.

RECEIVED  
2004 AUG 24 AM 9:01  
KPB  
CLERK'S OFFICE

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** Casey Planning & Design [caseys@alaska.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 20, 2004 11:42 AM  
**To:** 'Betty Glick'; 'Chris Moss'; 'Dan Chay'; 'Gary Superman'; 'Grace Merkes'; 'Linda Murphy, Assembly Clerk'; 'Milli Martin'; 'Paul Fischer'; 'Pete Sprague'; 'Ron Long'  
**Subject:** FW: Assembly Tuesday- Sterling Scenic Byway

**Regarding: Resolution 2004-051 Supporting the Designation of the Sterling Highway as a State Scenic Byway...**

This email arrived on Wednesday, after the Assembly meeting. Please include in packet for Sept. 7 Assembly meeting.

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**From:** Karen Covey [mailto:coveysons@gci.net]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 18, 2004 8:14 AM  
**To:** 'Dave and Nancy Casey'  
**Subject:** RE: Assembly Tuesday- Sterling Scenic Byway

Please submit this letter to the Assembly before the vote is taken at tonight's meeting.

Re: Scenic Byway

To Whom It May Concern:

It is our concern that the Sterling Hwy will be restricted to the 2 lanes we have now. We need passing lanes now as well as turnouts. Will these be permitted?  
We need to be aware that the landowners along the highway are notified before this Scenic Byway occurs. So that they will have some time to think about the changes and give their input.  
These proposed changes need to be studied before they are forced upon the communities. We may be sorry in the long run if these laws are adopted before we have had a chance to explore the consequences.

Kindest Regards,

Roger and Karen Covey  
Ninilchik AK

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RECEIVED  
2004 AUG 20 PM 12:05  
KPB  
CLERK'S OFFICE

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** Joanne Collins [apcoc@xyz.net]  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2004 10:16 AM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Scenic Byway

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly Clerk;

I strongly support the designation of the Sterling Highway from Skilak Lake Road to Anchor Point as a state Scenic Byway. Working in the tourism industry I have had an opportunity to peruse the "Alaska's Scenic Byways" booklet published by the State and know that many of our visitors use this booklet in planning their day trips; the Central and Southern Peninsula are missing a golden opportunity by not being included in this booklet. As the scenic byway program becomes better known, more and more visitors are asking about which of our highways have this designation and make a point of traveling them.

Thank you for this opportunity,  
Joanne Collins  
P. O. Box 341  
Anchor Point, AK 99556

08/24/04

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** Robin\_West@fws.gov  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2004 9:54 AM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Sterling Highway State Byway nomination

RE: Assembly Resolution to support designation of the Sterling Highway as a State Scenic Byway - Please include this letter in the Assembly's packet for their September 7, 2004 meeting.

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.....  
.....

Dear Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly members:

While Kenai National Wildlife Refuge has had no role in the recent proposal to nominate a portion of the Sterling Highway as a State Scenic Byway, we have watched the process with interest. Much of the proposal affects the current highway that travels through the Refuge - land that is still part of the National Wildlife Refuge System, but where a perpetual easement has been granted to the State of Alaska for administration of the road and right-of-way. We have looked closely at the proposal and have found no infringement upon federal, state, or local jurisdictions, nor do any overlay regulations follow such a designation. In a nutshell, the proposal may or may not help with improvements within this corridor, but can do nothing to threaten any of our management goals or controls.

Of most interest to us is the possibility of receiving future funding to improve rest stop facilities within this area. Currently we have been able to slowly increase our financial support for the maintenance of toilets and parking areas near the north entrance to Skilak Loop Road, but fuuding to expand maintenance (winter plowing and routine cleaning) as welll as adding one or two additional "rest areas" has been illusive. Recent requests to the State Department of Transportation to look at improvements to existing pull offs, as part of the Refuge's long-term planning process, have been met with verbal support, but no financial backing. I do see potential opportunities to follow a Scenic Byway designation for us to realize these rest area improvements which would benefit not only our seasonal visitors, but also local communities as folks travel back and forth between Anchorage and the Kenai Peninsula throughout the year. I stand ready to work on applicable grant requests with other potential interests for these type of improvements.

Thank you.

Robin L. West, Refuge Manager  
Kenai National Wildlfiie Refuge

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** John Parker [jparker@kpedd.org]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2004 9:44 AM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Sterling Highway Designation

A gentleman raised an issue on Sound Off this week that is worthy of the Assembly's consideration. In connection with the Ninilchik Fair, he asked: "Why is the Borough not helping these folks [Ninilchik Fair] out accessing grants for improvements?" KPEDD has worked with both the Sterling and Ninilchik communities in drafting community plans. Wide cross sections of both communities were represented through public meetings. Both plans identify priority projects that could be funded in whole or in part by tapping into the \$26M grant funding available for Scenic Byway Projects including the following:

Sterling priorities: Lobby State of Alaska to redesign post office intersection on highway; Put up a "Welcome to Sterling sign"; Establish a Visitor's Center; install and maintain public restroom facilities at community property on highway; widen the highway to four lanes.

Ninilchik priorities: Construct a safe pedestrian and bike pathway along the highway; erect streetlights along the highway; Increase public access to fairgrounds from highway; Construct a visitor's center; improve scenic beauty of local attractions.

As a Borough property taxpayer, I'd like to ask: "Why would we turn down a perfectly good and plentiful non-Borough taxpayer funding source for these and other projects identified by highway communities as priorities?" and "Is the Borough taxpayer going to be asked (as it has been by the gentleman on Sound Off) to pick up the slack after the Assembly denies them access to \$26M?"

John Parker  
KPEDD

## Essert, Sue Ellen

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**From:** Sharon Gaipman [sharon\_gaipman@dot.state.ak.us]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2004 3:39 PM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Sterling Highway Byway Designation -- to be included in the Assembly's packet for the reconsideration of Resolution 2004-051



Untitled Attachment kenai borough  
assembly.doc

25 August, 2004

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly  
Attn: Linda Murphy, Borough Clerk

Dear Assembly Members,

In June, 2002, Secretary of Transportation Norman Mineta designated Alaska's Marine Highway a National Scenic Byway. As a result, we joined a very special group -- the limited collection of America's Byways.

From city blocks such as Woodlawn Avenue in Detroit (Ford Motor Company) to timber roads in Washington state to the Creole Trail in the bayous of Louisiana, America's Byways tell the "story" of our country. Some are historical, some focus on the cultural, while others are included due to one of the remaining intrinsic values (archeological, natural, scenic, recreational). In all cases, however, they are extremely special since less than 100 have received a national designation. They are truly the jewels in the crown of American roadways.

These roadways are, quite simply, "value added" for the community(ies) they serve. For the Marine Highway this value added has meant a great deal of promotion - from the byways.org website to special promotions (such as inclusion in the Mobil Travel Guide or showcasing by the Travel Industry of America's See America campaign), to additional press (always appreciated when budgets are limited). Whether it's National Geographic Adventurer, Frommers Budget Travel or a AAA publication, these features have brought greater awareness to the state and System - and we hope, an increase in ridership.

One of the real "pluses" of a byway designation is that it comes without any strings attached. Not only does it not mean halting development along the corridor, it has the potential to increase economic development. A designation is the beginning of potential growth, not the opposite; whether it's more visitors or a capital project that will help visitors (and locals!) improve their understanding and enjoyment of a byway. Trite, but true - it is about recognition, not restriction. In order to qualify for this high honor, however, a road must first be a state byway, a process I'm hoping you'll be able to support. One of the reasons I'm writing is to let you know that our designation does not and will not include any zoning, land use regulations or restrictions of lands along our marine routes or in the communities we serve. This is incorporated in the corridor plan. The designation "...provides an excellent opportunity to increase awareness about the important role of coastal Alaska in our visitor's lives," embraces fishing, the timber industry, mining and all economic activities. Again, it supports land use rather than restricts it.



I also wanted to point out that in the last year, the Alaska Marine Highway byway group has successfully submitted three grant applications for operational start-up funding, interpretation (USDA Forest Service) and capital improvements (lighthouses). We hope to secure future grants to enhance interpretation, marketing and the aforementioned capital improvements.

Alaska's Marine Highway serves more than 30 communities. In the more than two years that we've had our designation, none of these communities have had a problem related to our being a national byway and, we hope, will be there to support us as we go for "level two" - the All American Road designation - in 2005. More visibility...more ridership...greater economic impact! It is my hope the Kenai Borough will ultimately approve obtaining a state byway designation for the Sterling Highway (between Skilak Lake Road and Anchor Point), so that it, too, will be able to reap the benefits this program provides.

Sincerely,

Sharon Gaipman  
Marketing Manager

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** monika@soldotnalodge.com  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2004 2:22 PM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** State Scenic Byway

We support the resolution of the designation of the Sterling Highway as a state scenic highway. We believe the whole economy on the Kenai Peninsula would profit from this change.

We hope the resolution will pass Monika Leiber and Steven Anderson Soldotna

## Essert, Sue Ellen

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**From:** Ivan Encelewski [ivan@niniilchiktribe-nsn.gov]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 26, 2004 1:26 PM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Letter of Support for Scenic Byway Designation



NTC Letter Of  
Support Scenic H...

Dear Assembly Clerk:

This is Ivan Encelewski, Executive Director of the Ninilchik Traditional Council. Please review and forward the attached letter of support from NTC which would designate that portion of the Sterling Highway from Anchor Point to Skilak as a Scenic Byway. It is our desire to have this entered into the official record so the assembly can view this for their upcoming meeting in regards to the reconsideration of KPB Resolution 2004-051. Thank You.

-----  
Ivan Encelewski, NTC Executive Director  
Ninilchik Traditional Council  
15910 Sterling Highway  
P.O. Box 39070  
Ninilchik, AK 99639  
PH: (907) 567-3313, Ext. 1007  
FX: (907) 567-3308  
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Web Site: [www.ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov](http://www.ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov)  
E-mail: [ivan@niniilchiktribe-nsn.gov](mailto:ivan@niniilchiktribe-nsn.gov)  
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# Ninilchik Traditional Council

P.O. Box 39070

Ninilchik, Alaska 99639

Ph: 907 567-3313 / Fx: 907 567-3308

Email: [ntc@ninelchiktribe-nsn.gov](mailto:ntc@ninelchiktribe-nsn.gov)

Web Site: [www.ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov](http://www.ninilchiktribe-nsn.gov)

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August 25, 2004

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly  
144 N. Binkley  
Soldotna, AK 99669

RE: Letter of Support for Sterling Hwy. State Scenic Byway Designation

Dear Honorable Assemblymen and Assemblywomen:

The Ninilchik Traditional Council (NTC), the federally and state recognized sovereign and autonomous tribal government here in Ninilchik, would like to extend our support for the efforts to designate that portion of the Sterling Highway from Anchor Point to Skilak as a State Scenic Byway. The Ninilchik Traditional Council represents approximately six hundred (600) Tribal members with Tribal Boundaries extending from Kasilof through Homer. Much of the proposed Scenic Byway passes through Tribal Boundaries, and the Tribe and its members have a vested interest in seeing that this highway is recognized for its important historical and cultural value. Not only would our community benefit, but all communities along the Sterling Highway may see a positive impact.

In addition to the obvious world class scenic and recreation qualities of this proposed Scenic Byway, this could provide enhanced access to resources of paramount importance to the Ninilchik Tribe and other various communities. A planning partnership would be developed that involves local communities, individuals, and interested groups, and NTC is committed to working together in order to obtain this State status. NTC also supports the endeavor to eventually obtain National designation, making the Sterling Highway America's first National Scenic Byway loop linking the Seward All American Road to Alaska's Marine Highway National Scenic Byway.

In closing, the Ninilchik Traditional Council hereby respectfully requests your ardent support in the reconsideration of KPB Resolution 2004-051, which would have provided Borough assembly support for the designation of the Sterling Highway between Skilak Road and Anchor Point as a State Scenic Byway. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ivan Encelewski".

Ivan Encelewski  
NTC Executive Director

c: file

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** Karen Covey [coveysons@gci.net]  
**Sent:** Friday, August 27, 2004 9:20 AM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Byways

To Whom It May Concern:

We are reluctant to support the Sterling Highway Scenic Byways project until we have more information on this change.

We think it is important that landowners along the route are notified so that they may give their input before these changes are considered.

If it is enacted, who knows what the downside will be after the grant money is applied for? It is our concern that possibly new right of way restrictions or highway improvements could be affected and determined by only a few people.

Let's think about it before we jump in and make these changes without further information on the what the consequences could be.

Best Regards,  
Roger and Karen Covey

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** joann [joalaska@ptialaska.net]  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 26, 2004 7:15 PM  
**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us  
**Subject:** Scenic Highway designation

**I only received notice about this, TODAY, and would like my email to go into the packets if at all possible.**

**I did attend the Assembly meeting where this item was supposed to be discussed, and stayed until midnight, and then found it was not going to be discussed, until a later meeting. I could not make that meeting, so I hope my message CAN be in the Assembly members packet for the discussion on this issue.**

**THANK YOU.**

**Dear Assembly member,**

**I would URGE all of you, to go online and see what this program REALLY means, in states that have already accepted it.**

**You will notice that the words "MONITOR" ----"COMPLIANCE" ---- and "ENFORCEMENT" are used quite often.**

**You should ALL be able to see, that NO FEDERAL PROGRAM COMES WITHOUT "STRINGS"....**

**The state level may not put any regulations on land use, but you should look into the end goal ... FEDERAL GOVERNANCE, and see how this will affect YOUR way of life. You will have someone in Washington D.C. deciding what is considered 'scenic' or not. They might decide that boats on trailers are NOT 'scenic', or greenhouses, or UNPAINTED out buildings....or 'NO TRESSPASSING' signs ... or whatever they may not like.**

**The highway WILL be MONITORED and if something is not considered 'scenic' COMPLAINCE will be required, or ENFORCEMENT WILL OCCUR!**

**I fail to see why this program is even being considered here - since there is ONLY ONE HIGHWAY. Whether it's designated 'scenic' or not - *there is no other option!* How can this program increase tourism? ALL the tourists already have to use THIS ROAD!**

**WHY should we get entangled with an invasive program that WILL create two classes of property owners .... those who live ON the highway, and those who do NOT live on the highway?**

**I do not have a business along the highway, but have received e-mails from other places that indicate this program is NOT as 'benign' as it is being portrayed.**

**Once it is a done deal, you WILL be subject to ...**

**MONITORING ...COMPLIANCE ...and ENFORCEMENT.**

**joalaska@ptialaska.net**

**Joann Odd  
P.O. Box 39296**

08/27/04

**Ninilchik, AK 99639**

08/27/04

**AGENDA ITEM** D.I.A.  
*Lands Committee*

**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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**From:** Scott Hanson [townoflivingtrees@acsalaska.net]

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2004 2:33 PM

**To:** assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us

**Subject:** Sterling Highway State Byway

Attention: Assembly member

As property owner along the Sterling Highway, I give my full support to the designation of the Sterling Highway as a State Scenic Byway.

Please pass this resolution now so work can get started as soon as possible.

Thank you.

Scott Hanson  
Hanson's Custom Carvings



**Essert, Sue Ellen**

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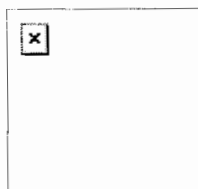
Linda

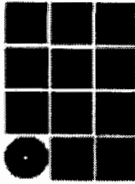
Please include the enclosed letter and two attachments in the Assembly's packet for the Sept 7<sup>th</sup> meeting for the reconsideration of Resolution 2004-051, Designation of the Sterling Highway as a State Byway. If you have any problems opening these documents, please contact me. Thanks!

Cheers,

**Christopher Merti, ASLA**  
**Landscape Architect**

Jensen Yorba Lott Inc.  
522 West 10<sup>th</sup> Street  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
(907) 586-1070  
[www.jensenyorbalott.com](http://www.jensenyorbalott.com)





August 25, 2004

**Architecture  
Interiors  
Landscape  
Architecture**

RE: Reconsideration of Resolution 2004-051

Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly  
144 North Binkley  
Soldotna, Alaska 99669

1935  
Founded as  
H.B. Foss Company

1945  
Foss & Malcolm

1949  
Foss & Olsen

1956  
Olsen & Sands

1969  
Sands & Ackley

1974  
Ackley & Associates,  
Inc.

1979  
Ackley/Jensen  
Architects, Inc.

1985  
Jensen Douglas  
Architects, Inc.

1997  
Jensen Yorba Lott, Inc.

Dear President Sprague and Assembly Members:

I would like to thank you for your thorough discussion and valid questions in the consideration of the Sterling Highway as a State Byway from the west intersection of Skilak Lake Loop Road to Anchor Point. We have been asked to submit additional information to help clarify any questions you may have in regards to the reconsideration vote on Resolution 2004-051.

Based on the August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004 Assembly meeting we would like to summarize the concerns expressed by the Assembly and the public.

- What is a 'stakeholder'?
- Volcano Learning Center should not be included in the State Byway Application
- Sterling Highway is not scenic or merit byway designation
- Congestion along the Sterling during peak visitor season
- There needs to be more public involvement and public awareness
- Letters of support were templates
- What is the process for self de-designation?
- What are the benefits and challenges related to byway designation for other Alaskan Byways?
- Concerns over private land use restrictions or zoning

The following are responses to each of these concerns:

## Stakeholder

A stakeholder is someone with a personal or financial stake in something. In the planning profession, a stakeholder is anyone who is interested in, or affected by, the outcome of a planning endeavor, either positively, negatively, or neutrally. Ideally, a planning project will engage a wide range of stakeholders in order to weigh the pros and cons, and determine the best possible solution. *Stakeholders also include those who are in opposition and their involvement is essential to create a 'balanced' outcome rather than a one-sided plan generated by only those who support the project.* A stakeholder may be a person representing a larger group of people, a civic body, a business, or simply be an interested individual.

The Sterling Byway Stakeholder List attached to the State application is required by ADOT&PF to ensure that a public outreach process has begun as part of the project. It does not imply that all those on the list are supporters. We initially compiled our stakeholder list by identifying civic leaders and organizations from communities along the Sterling Highway. Others were added from lists gathered at community meetings, word of mouth, phone calls, etc. Eventually, we hope to triple the list as community leaders reach out to their locals and more people hear about the project from community meetings, the media, and word of mouth.

## Volcano Learning Center

This project was brought up by some people along the corridor as a potential future project that MIGHT be supported. Due to concerns by the Assembly, all references to the Volcano Learning Center have been deleted from the application. Please see the attached, revised 'Corridor Issues' section that will replace the draft version as part of the State application, should the Assembly support the nomination. Due to time restrictions, it would be impossible to have all supporters delete this section from their letters of support and resubmit in a timely manner before Assembly reconsideration. We believe removing the Volcano Learning Center from the State application will meet the desires of the Assembly.

## Sterling Highway is not Scenic or worthy of designation

It was discussed that the Sterling ranked low for 'aesthetic quality' based on the *Alaska Scenic Byways Statewide Study*, published in February, 2002. While this is true, the survey also stated that the highway **ranked second in Alaska for Recreational and Cultural Qualities**. It ranked fifth for scenic qualities and fourth for 'best highway places'. The survey summarizes that the **Sterling** along with the Parks, Richardson and Denali Highways should receive **top priority** for obtaining National Byway designation for their outstanding qualities. Should the Sterling be nominated for State designation, it would be primarily for its **recreational** qualities, not scenic. A summary of the survey is attached and the complete survey can be found at <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/scenic/assets/research.pdf>

### **Congestion on the Sterling During Peak Periods**

We are all too familiar with the congestion that occurs along the Sterling Highway during the peak of 'red' and 'king' seasons. Byway designation may bring some additional visitors during this season but the benefit of designation is to market the Sterling as more than a salmon fishing destination. One benefit of designation is to have a consolidated marketing effort to bring people to the Sterling during non-peak or the 'shoulder' to help reduce this influx of visitors at one time. A well planned marketing effort will spread the visitors out over a longer period of time by developing a wider range of recreational opportunities, which benefits all. Visitors have a more positive experience and economic diversity is obtained by spreading out the season by promoting all of the great recreation opportunities year round, and peak seasons are better managed, thus reducing congestion and keeping residents happy. The byway program with its national and international marketing can assist with this effort. The concern with tourism-related congestion is now added to the marketing section of the State application and is contained in the revised, attached 'Corridor Issues'.

### **There Needs to be More Public Involvement and Outreach**

The byway program is based on a grassroots effort by those along the highway. We believe we did an excellent job getting the word out over a short period of time, but much more outreach will be done during future planning efforts as part of this designation. Our outreach process began with an informational presentation to the Assembly since each of you represents residents of the Kenai Peninsula and are responsible for making leadership decisions on their behalf. It is typical in Byway designation to get Assembly approval at an early stage, as they are the voice of a large population. It is true we have not contacted every person along the Sterling, but by coming to the Assembly we are able to get representation of the people and the Assembly will make an informed decision. Should the Sterling receive State designation, a thorough and complete outreach and public involvement phase will begin along the entire Sterling Highway.

### **Letters of Support were Templates**

Many of the letters of support were from a template generated by the consultant. We provided this information after speaking with individuals and organizations and letting them know about the Byway program. Many were already aware of the program. Many of these supporters were too busy to write their own letter and asked for a template to work off. Many support letters are a copy of this template; however many others modified portions of the template to express their issues, concerns and support. While many supporters were too busy to draft an original letter, they all took the time to ask enough questions to fully understand the project. We did encounter a few people who did not support the designation and informed them to write a letter to the Assembly or testify. We strive to maintain an open process.

### **What is the Process for Self De-Designation?**

As explained at the August 17th meeting, the process required to “opt out” or “de-designate” the Sterling Highway, should you decide to, is very simple. A letter is sent to the Alaska Department of Transportation to request the State Designation be removed by a representing body such as the Borough Assembly. The same process is utilized for National Byways, however the request is sent to Federal Highways. Once the request is received, the Highway is officially no longer a designated Byway from that point forward. The portion of the Federal Register that described a lengthy process of de-designation, read aloud by Assembly Member Merkes, was referring to the steps required by the National Byway program to de-designate a byway if they find it no longer qualifies as a National Byway.

### **What are the Benefits and Challenges of Byway Designation?**

There was a desire to understand what Byway Designation meant for other Alaskan Highways with National Byway designation. We have asked for a representative from the Seward and Glenn Highways to submit a letter to the Assembly to discuss this issue. These should arrive separately from this package.

### **Concerns Over Private Land Use Restrictions or Zoning**

We contacted the National Scenic Byways Resource Center to see if any work had been done to identify byways that are using land use regulations. The Resource Center staff emphasized that the program is focused on ‘recognition not regulation’ and that land use regulation does **not** occur on the majority of byways.

The one unified comment we have heard is that no one along the Sterling Highway supports private land use or zoning restrictions. Resolution 2004-051 clearly states that there will be no land use restrictions or zoning as part of the designation and we will uphold that direction.

We hope the modifications we made to the State Byway Application meet your needs and address your concerns. Should you have any questions or require any additional information, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Christopher Mertl, ASLA  
Scenic Byway Consultant

## CORRIDOR MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Public Involvement. Prior to submitting this application, a significant outreach effort directed towards stakeholders was carried out on the Sterling Highway with an emphasis on the undesignated portion of the highway. Initial stakeholder meetings were held along the undesignated portion of the Sterling during the month of April. Many stakeholders expressed a desire to dedicate the entire Sterling Highway as a State Scenic Byway and to then immediately nominate the highway for National Byway status. Several meetings were held in Soldotna, Homer and Cooper Landing and many more are being scheduled for the near future. Many stakeholders along the corridor were visited during the inventory of the highway, including local, state and federal agencies. Interviews were held with local organizations, businesses and users of the area. A large majority were excited about the prospects of the designation.

Marketing. An obvious benefit of designation for the Sterling Highway is the increase in available marketing opportunities for the highway and the communities along the corridor. Marketing of a Scenic Byway loop on the Kenai Peninsula in partnership with the Seward All American Road and the Nationally Designated Alaska's Marine Highway creates a powerful marketing tool once the loop is completed with the designation of the Sterling Highway. ***Marketing efforts should not concentration only on fishing, but instead focus on all of the outstanding recreation opportunities found along the highway. This will help disperse visitors to the Sterling Highway to the less congested 'shoulder' seasons year round rather than create additional congestion during peak visitor periods.***

Resource Protection. There was some concern that additional recreation impacts, especially by those with an interest in sport fishing, might result in a decrease in fish populations caused by additional stream bank erosion and other habitat destruction; however, interviews with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game indicate that the salt and freshwater fish populations are stable and healthy. A major contributor to this stability is ADF&G's successful management of the fishery and recognition that sport fishing opportunities are an essential element of Alaska's economy and to the well being of Alaska's residents. Forecasting shows a strong fishery capable of sustaining increased use.

An advantage of State and National designation is the grant money that would be available for improving river access for fishing and wildlife viewing. New shoreline facilities could help disperse 'combat fishing' at accessible locations. Such facilities would also benefit the fishery by stabilizing stream banks by creating durable trails and fishing platforms to reduce damage to salmon streams and rivers. Wayside facilities could be funded to reduce haphazard parking along the Sterling Highway where anglers are parking to access rivers or popular clamming beaches. Organized parking and wayside facilities would improve the overall safety and enjoyment of the recreation opportunities along the highway. Such improvements are likely priorities along the undesignated portion of the Sterling Highway, and would benefit residents, visitors, wildlife, and the natural habitat along the corridor.

Parking Facilities. Numerous other recreational opportunities beyond fishing are found along the undesignated portion of the highway and are only accessed directly from the highway. In many cases, similar to river and beach access, vehicles with snow machine trailers, dog mushing vehicles, and private vehicles with weekend skiers, hikers, hunters

or wildlife enthusiasts park along the highway in unstructured pullouts and wide shoulder areas. Facilities need to be improved for these users to access the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge and Caribou Hills. This is especially true in the areas near Anchor River and Clam Gulch where highway safety has become an issue. Since these are existing recreation areas, there is the opportunity to add interpretive facilities and improved signage to help guide and inform visitors about these significant recreation areas.

Camping Facilities. The primary agencies currently providing recreational facilities along the undesignated portion of the Sterling are Alaska State Parks and the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. Alaska State Parks estimates that their recreational facilities run at approximately 90% occupancy from Memorial Day to July 4th and from 60-80% for the remainder of the summer season. They have capacity for additional users. The Refuge has similar capacity statistics and is also capable of handling an increase in users. Additional visitors will also benefit local privately run recreational facilities such as campgrounds, RV parks and cabins. This sector would welcome an increase in users.

Road Safety. Byway designation brings an increase in vehicular and pedestrian traffic. The northern portion of the highway has passing lanes at strategic locations to reduce congestion and improve safety. New wayside sites have been created and paved as part of a recent highway resurfacing project and could be further upgraded to include restrooms through the byways grant program. In more populated communities along the Sterling highway including Soldotna, Sterling, Homer and Anchor Point, the highway increases from two lanes to three or five, depending on traffic volumes and density of the community. Striped shoulders are present along most of the highway corridor, allowing for safer pedestrian travel.

Interpretive Facilities. There are several potential partnerships in the making to help improve visitor services and interpretive facilities along the Sterling Highway. Byway designation can help strengthen existing infrastructure through the funding opportunities of the byway grant program. The US Fish and Wildlife Service is working with the USDA Forest Service to construct a new visitor interpretive center on the border between the National Forest and Refuge. ~~The Kenai Peninsula Borough has purchased land along the Sterling Highway between Ninilchik and Happy Valley with the intent to build a volcano interpretive center, but the project has been on hold for many years. Byway designation could make funds available and bring partners together to complete the development of these facilities.~~ New interpretive facilities are needed and could be placed at trail heads, at wayside facilities along the highway, and at public access points to recreation areas.

Signage. Signage is an element in highway design that can greatly improve a visitor's experience. The Sterling Highway is a great road with great communities along its corridor. There are many stories to be told about the highway, its people, the landscape, natural resources and history. Interpretation is a key element of both state and national byway designation. Stories told through the Scenic Byways program can help visitors and residents of the Sterling Highway corridor better understand the Kenai Peninsula and its rich land.

Community Organization. One of the strong benefits of having the entire Sterling designated as a state byway is the formation of a byway group. This group is already starting to form for the Sterling Highway. A grassroots byway group can bring people and civic organizations together to deal with issues related to the corridor. Problem-

solving and improvements for the Sterling Highway corridor can be accomplished by bringing together a variety of interests and forming new partnerships to deal with issues, priorities and opportunities. At this early stage it seems that most people who have expressed an interest in the byway designation do not favor land restrictions or new zoning related to the highway. They do, however, favor state byway designation of the Sterling Highway.



The Sterling Highway has outstanding recreation opportunities throughout the entire corridor from the Wye to Homer. Recreation opportunities include wildlife viewing, hiking, camping, fishing, snow machining, cross country skiing, beachcombing, horseback riding, mountain biking, rafting, kayaking and dog mushing; to name a few. There is little doubt in the minds of Alaskans to the recreation opportunities that lie along the Sterling Highway. If the Sterling Highway is designated as a State or National Byway it would be primarily for its **recreational** qualities, not scenic. **Alaskans identify the Sterling as one of the top 5 byways in the State.** The following excerpts are from the *Alaska Scenic Byways Statewide Study*, February 22, 2002, prepared by Greg Brown, Alaska Pacific University, a document referenced by Assemblywoman Merkes on August 17, 2004.

#### ***Executive Summary (Page 3-4)***

*In June of 2001, a mail survey was conducted by Alaska Pacific University through a National Scenic Byways research grant administered through the Alaska Department of Transportation. The purpose of the study was to identify and measure general public awareness about the scenic byway system and to comprehensively assess and measure actual and potential scenic byway values in Alaska for potential use in scenic byway planning (designation, enhancement, and maintenance), scenic byway marketing, and scenic byway interpretation.*

*The scenic qualities of Alaska's highways were measured a number of different ways. Alaska residents consistently chose the Seward highway and Alaska Marine highway as the most scenic highways while the Glenn highway segment (Anchorage to Palmer) was rated the least scenic highway. Alaskans are most familiar with the Glenn, Seward, Parks, and Sterling highways and least familiar with the Dalton, Elliot, and Taylor highways.*

*Analysis of the spatial data for scenic byway designation criteria (scenic, recreation, natural, cultural, historic, and archeological qualities) indicates that virtually all highways in Alaska would meet the criteria for National Scenic Byway designation. Based on the abundance of byway qualities, the Richardson Highway (from Valdez to Glennallen) should be the next Alaska highway considered for national scenic byway designation. Following the Richardson Highway, the Parks, Sterling, Denali, and Alaska Marine Highways should receive priority for national recognition over the other Alaska highways.*

#### ***Introduction (Page 5-6)***

*Alaska is widely acknowledged to have some of the most scenic landscapes, abundant wildlife, and wilderness recreation opportunities remaining in North America. While the highway system in Alaska was originally developed to provide a functional transportation infrastructure between regions and communities, the highway system today provides important opportunities for both Alaskans and visitors to access and enjoy*

*the multiple values inherent in a wild landscape. Visitors to Alaska are increasingly taking advantage of the highway system.*

*Many of the six intrinsic qualities (scenic, historic, cultural, natural, recreational, and archaeological) required for the designation of a National Scenic Byway appear to be present in much of the Alaska highway system. The Seward Highway is an official All American Road and the Richardson and Dalton Highways are in various stages of the scenic byway planning process. Other highways have the potential for future designation.*

*Based on the abundance of byway qualities, the Richardson Highway (from Valdez to Glennallen) should be the next Alaska highway considered for national scenic byway designation. Following the Richardson Highway, the Parks, Sterling, Denali, and Alaska Marine Highways should receive priority for national recognition over the other Alaska highways.*

#### ***Spatial Location of Outdoor Activities in Highway Corridors. (Page 13)***

*Participants were asked to identify places where they engage in various outdoor activities. Table 19 contains the percent of combined outdoor activities by highway corridor. Consistent with the previous "Recreation" scenic byway quality finding, the Seward Highway and Sterling Highways also have the highest number of outdoor activities located in their respective highway corridors.*

#### ***Discussion (Page 14-15)***

*The survey results suggest several possibilities for "themes" that could be used to identify and promote the various highways in Alaska. These themes would be based on the perceptions of Alaska residents about the various highways. For example, some potential ideas for slogans to identify and promote Alaska's highways might include the following:*

*Highway Theme to emphasize for Designation/Recognition Sterling Access to or abundance of outdoor recreation opportunities*

*"The Recreation Highway"*

*"Gateway to the Great Outdoors"*

*"Where Alaskans Recreate"*

Table 18 and 19 from the survey summarizes the following about the Sterling Highway:

#### ***Recreation Byway Qualities:***

*Seward (15.8%)*

*Sterling (14.9%)*

*Parks (11.5%)*

#### ***Cultural Byway Qualities:***

*Alaska's Marine Highway (SE) (11.5%)*

*Sterling (9.2%)*

*Glenn (9.2%)*

***Scenic Byway Qualities:***

*Seward (15.6%)*

*Richardson (13.5%)*

*Glenn (11.5%)*

*Parks (11.3%)*

*Sterling (8.7%)*

*The Sterling ranked 5<sup>th</sup> for Archeological Byway Qualities and 6<sup>th</sup> for Natural Qualities.*

*Overall the Sterling ranked 5<sup>th</sup> in Alaska for having all six byway qualities (recreation, natural, scenic, historic, cultural and archeological).*

Assemblywoman Merkes did correctly point out that the survey indicated that the Sterling has the second 'Worst Aesthetics' but the survey also states that the Sterling ranked fourth overall for 'Best Highway Places' and second overall for 'Best Outdoor Activities' in Alaska.

Should the Sterling Highway be designated, it would be for its **recreational** qualities which Alaskans clearly indicate are prevalent along the corridor.

I urge all Assembly members to review this document which can be found at <http://www.dot.state.ak.us/stwdplng/scenic/assets/research.pdf>



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Number of pages including cover: 2 Date: 9/2/04

Notes:

Hi Linda -  
 Your help in providing the  
 attached editorial to  
 Assembly members and  
 the Mayor would be  
 much appreciated.

Thanks, Anne Marie

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**Editorial****Assembly should say  
'yes' to scenic byway**

It seems so motherhood and apple pie, it's hard to understand why the Kenai Peninsula Borough Assembly isn't unanimously supporting an effort to designate the Sterling Highway between Skilak Lake Road and Anchor Point a state Scenic Byway.

Already two portions of the highway have that moniker: from Anchor Point to Homer and from Skilak Lake Road to the Seward Highway.

As assembly member Milli Martin of Diamond Ridge says: It makes sense to connect all the dots — in this case, all peninsula communities along the highway.

The designation also would connect the dots of a bigger picture by completing the country's first scenic byway loop, linking the Sterling Highway, the Seward All American Road and Alaska's Marine Highway National Scenic Byway, according to supporters. That bigger picture would create unique marketing and economic opportunities for all peninsula communities.

Without the borough's support, it's unlikely the state designation will become a reality. Without the state designation, the inclusion of the Sterling Highway in the national byways program will not go forward.

That would be unfortunate.

The byways program is not about government regulation or control. There are no strings attached — except for a prohibition on new billboards and Alaska already has a billboard law in place. It's also not about roads with the best views. It's about recognition of highways that have recreational, historical, cultural, natural or archaeological values. The Sterling Highway has all those traits in abundance — plus, for most of its length, views that rival those of any highway in the world.

While some may argue that there are enough tourists who visit the peninsula without such a designation, the peninsula's popularity as a visitor destination is exactly why the borough should lend its support to the byway program.

The designation opens the door to federal grants that could be used for such things as interpretive signs, rest stops, restrooms, trail heads, visitor centers, riverbank rehabilitation and construction of fishing platforms. It's funding that wouldn't be available otherwise, and projects are determined at the local level. Anyone who drives the Sterling Highway frequently knows there's a lack of amenities along long stretches of the road — amenities that could be put to good use by residents and visitors no matter what the season.

More important than the economic opportunities the byway designation will bring, however, is the potential it holds to unite the diverse communities along the highway. As the peninsula prepares for the Arctic Winter Games in 2006, having the entire area linked by this common thread could prove pivotal, setting the stage for the entire games. The cooperation needed for both the games and the byway designation could stretch and spread to other areas and issues.

The assembly is missing not only an economic opportunity, but also a chance to unite peninsula communities behind something bigger than each individual place. When the resolution supporting the scenic byway designation is heard again next week, assembly members should put aside unfounded fears and vote "yes."

Homer News  
9/2/04