

Dear Governor Walker,

We write today to ask you to consider re-appropriating the unobligated balance of the FY2014 capital budget appropriation of \$20 million for the U-Med Northern Access Road. We are faced with the stark reality of a major fiscal crisis that we did not plan for and that has come about suddenly. The rapid decline in oil prices is forcing us to make difficult and unpleasant decisions, but this is our reality and we must act responsibly in this face of this crisis. Yesterday's announcement by Standard and Poors and the previous downgrade from Moody's make it clear the state is under scrutiny. We need to take steps immediately to show we will respond to this challenging time. Given the circumstances we find ourselves in, we must adopt a back to basics approach and maintain our critical infrastructure with the limited funds we have. This costly new road can not be supported at this time.

In addition to our fiscal crisis, there are several other reasons to reconsider this project and question whether now is the right time. Our greatest community concern is public safety. While funds have been appropriated for a connector road no funds have been obligated or even discussed for the significant upgrades that would be necessary along the existing stretch of Bragaw between Mountain View Drive and Northern Lights Boulevard. There are four schools along this stretch of road, East High School, Russian Jack Elementary School, Clark Middle School, and the Alaska Native Cultural Charter School. Neighborhood children walking to and from school daily cross Bragaw coming and leaving school. We believe the additional traffic would cause a significant public safety concern for children crossing everyday and would require installation of signalized pedestrian crossings, costly infrastructure that we can not afford at this time.

Beyond the students, this area has a large volume of pedestrian traffic as neighbors cross Bragaw leaving Russian Jack neighborhoods to access businesses in the Northway Mall, Costco, gas stations, and local restaurants. These neighbors complain of difficulty safely exiting their neighbor with the current volume of traffic. Additional traffic will cause hazards for pedestrian travel that would also need to be mitigated. Again, we believe signalized crossing or pedestrian bridges would be necessary to maintain safe pedestrian access.

All area community councils have passed resolutions opposing the road. This includes University Area Community Council, Rogers Park Community Council, Airport Heights Community Council, Russian Jack Community Council, and Mountain View Community Council. In some cases, multiple resolutions have been passed over the years as neighbors have consistently maintained their position that they do not support this road. They have called for discussion of the additional upgrades that would be necessary to maintain public safety in our area if the road was built. Their requests have not been answered. That is unacceptable. Their concerns should be addressed before a project moves forward.

We don't oppose progress or growth, but this road is not necessary at this time. Some suggested the opening of the new Alaska Airlines Sports Arena would necessitate a road, but the arena has been open for months and has successfully hosted sold out events with no traffic problems. The arena frequently sits empty and at this time does not have another major event scheduled for months. UAA, in the most recent development plan, does not call for development of the U-Med area in the next ten years.

We have an opportunity to change course on an unneeded project that we can't really afford if we consider the true cost of the new stretch of road and all of the upgrades that would be necessary along the existing stretch of road.

We are early enough in this process that it makes sense to stop now and we urge you to act quickly so we can redirect these funds to other needed projects that will deteriorate without maintenance. We can weather this crisis and make sure we protect our public assets by focusing our limited funds on taking care of what we have and finishing what we've already started.

Thank you for consideration of this request,

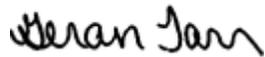
Senator Berta Gardner

Handwritten signature of Berta Gardner in black ink.

Senator Bill Wielechowski

Handwritten signature of Bill Wielechowski in black ink.

Representative Geran Tarr

Handwritten signature of Geran Tarr in black ink.

Representative Andy Josephson

Handwritten signature of Andy Josephson in black ink.