

Debra Thompson

From: Rebecca Knight <bknight15@icloud.com>
Sent: Tuesday, August 1, 2023 7:24 PM
To: Assembly
Cc: Clerk City Of Kupreanof.org; rep.himschoot@akleg.gov
Subject: Kake Access Project/OVK RAISE Grant/Fiscal Prudence

Hello Borough of Petersburg Mayor and Assembly Members,

I request that the Assembly discuss the relationship between the Kake Access Project (KAP) and the recently awarded Organized Village of Kake (OVK) RAISE Grant. [https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-06/RAISE 2023 Fact Sheets 2.pdf](https://www.transportation.gov/sites/dot.gov/files/2023-06/RAISE%2023%20Fact%20Sheets%202.pdf)

Such discussion is entirely appropriate. Activities proposed in the grant directly impact the Petersburg Borough, including the community of Kupreanof.

As I wrote to you in July, the grant proposes to:

"complete planning and design activities for roadway improvements between Kake and Petersburg. Improvements include resurfacing approximately 2.7 miles of existing aggregate surfaced road, reconditioning and resurfacing approximately 43.5 miles of existing unimproved roads, and constructing approximately 7 miles of new road."

At least a portion of the funds will be used to plan and design for activities that the public was led to believe were accomplished on the recently completed \$40 MM (2012 appropriated SOA funds) Kake Access Project. It also proposes to extend the road to nowhere at Twelve Mile Creek to Five Mile Creek—yet another remote destination.

Included in the brief Summary for the grant award was verbiage about:

how "...the improved roads will allow emergency vehicles to better access communities and existing medical facilities,"
how "over 40 culverts" would be replaced,
how it will "provide direct and affordable transportation options for intermodal and multimodal freight movement"
and
how "quality of life will be addressed by allowing for improved access to medical services..."

These claims are simply untrue. Their accuracy should have been fact checked prior to the grant award.

The original KAP project identified 57 culverts in need of replacement/repair, yet the RAISE grant summary claims that over 40 culverts will be replaced. This begs the question about how many were actually repaired under the original KAP.

"Extra work" on the KAP was [reportedly](#) accomplished due to cost underruns, including "adding additional surface course to make the road smoother and brush[ing] the sides of the road...Our goal with the extra work was to make this road as traversable as possible and as safe as possible" according to the ADOT&PF. This begs the question as to why any improvements are needed, if the new KAP road was purportedly constructed to such a high standard as described by ADOT & PF?

In fact, the ADOT & PF Corps of Engineers application for the original KAP alleged to provide "**year-round** [emphasis added] surface transportation access on Kupreanof Island between the community of Kake and a new boat launch on the eastern shore of Kupreanof Island." Clearly that did not happen. One resident told me that Kake residents couldn't even get the DOT to plow the road to the City dump, so questioned that claim from the outset.

Various contracts were let for the KAP, one of which awarded \$15.6 MM to KIEWIT for "Mobilization and Reconditioning" on July 1, 2020. According to media the total project's construction cost was \$34 MM ([Kake Road Complete](#)) with the remainder of the original allocated for "planning, design and oversight on the project." If \$40 MM of State funds were allocated for the project, then the math does not match up.

There are no shortage of questions which need to be answered. Just a sampling:

First, why would the federal government award the grant when only a few years ago, they (Federal Highways Administration) wisely pulled their support for the project?

OVK strongly opposed the KAP project, slated to end at Twelve Mile Creek only three years ago. Why the sudden support for the extended road project, now proposed to end at Five Mile Creek?

What is the real purpose and need for this road?

Are there mineral claims in the works, including one that could benefit from a publicly funded road project?

What about the "Plasma Burner" that was proposed for Kake a few years ago? If plans are in the works for this project, will access to the road be required?

Specifically, where did all the money go for the original KAP given that a new grant has been awarded to advance work that was ostensibly already completed?

Seems an independent audit is in order. With all the controversy about funding for education, a new medical facility, and affordable sites for housing, the Petersburg Borough would be remiss not to ask some hard questions about how public money is being spent.

Thank you for your consideration,

Becky Knight
Petersburg resident

I believe an independent audit should be conducted to determine exactly what throwing good money after bad.