

**STATEMENT OF BECKY KNIGHT
PETERSBURG BOROUGH RESOLUTION 2020-21
KAKE ACCESS PROJECT
NOV. 2, 2020
Via meeting call-in #: 800-954-0633**

Hello Mayor and Assembly Members,

My name is Becky Knight and I represent myself.

I urge you to pass Resolution 2020-21 opposing future funding and asking for a Kake Access Project public hearing, with agency and local officials and Senator Stedman in attendance, and including an Environmental Impact Statement. These actions would allow for two way communication plus provide for long overdue transparency about this latest version of the project.

The Kake Access Project makes no sense:

- It's costs are exorbitant—especially so during our severe state budget crisis and pandemic;
- The official “purpose and need” of “subsistence and recreation” is disingenuous at best, and at worst a complete fabrication;
- In fact, the residents of Kake do not support the project largely due to its impacts on their subsistence needs;
- Moreover, Kake residents do not believe that this road would effectively serve public safety purposes, as has been alleged;
- There is little community support for it, not only within the Petersburg Borough, but including from Kake residents and the City of Kupreanof;
- According to official State documents for the budget allocation, it was approved to, “construct approximately 22 miles of new single lane, unpaved roadway and bridges and upgrade approximately 23 miles of existing logging roads on the north end of Kupreanof Island to connect the communities of Kake and Petersburg.” The current proposal will only build 5.4 miles of new road and recondition 42 miles of existing roadway, but apparently for the same eye popping \$40 MM price tag as the original budget allocation. It ends a distant twelve miles from Petersburg;
- There are no funds to support year round maintenance, despite DOT's assertion that the intent is to keep the roadway open year 'round. The failure to maintain forest roadways results in their degradation, impacting precious fish habitat including blocked culverts which prevent fish passage;
- In fact, the Federal Highways Administration abandoned the project largely due to insufficient State funds to maintain it;
- The 2012 appropriation was approved absent any “public review process at the local level” and nor was it a “community priority.” At the time, community residents were miffed to learn of the project and its enormous budget allocation;

- Through the years it failed to muster support despite taking on various identities including for an electrical intertie, speculative mining and timber extraction purposes, and even a purported biomass plasma burner. If these are intended uses, then the public must be fully informed of these plans;
- There needs to be a full accounting of the fate of the funding stream to date;
- There needs to be explanations regarding discrepancies regarding the high costs of road re-conditioning that far exceed historical costs of new construction for similar forest roads;
- The open ended Construction Manager/General Contractor process allows for incomplete project design, inviting cost overruns. For instance, it is unknown how many culverts and bridges are required for the project. These expensive design considerations should be clearly identified beforehand—not on a design-as-you-go basis.

Although Senator Stedman was invited last winter to provide more information about the project, he has not made himself available since, for that purpose, yet has held fundraisers here and including an unannounced visit to Petersburg, but only with a few Borough representatives on July 7— the day after the end of the Army Corps federal permit comment deadline.

Noteworthy, is that Kiewit ranks at No. 71 on the Engineering News Record list of the “Top 250 International Contractors,” reporting over a billion dollars in 2019 revenue. They are a major contractor in energy, industrial, power, and transportation sectors.

Just who does this project serve—local residents or international contractors and speculative and unidentified projects built on the public dime but for private profit?

Our residents deserve answers. I urge you to swiftly pass resolution 2020-21.

Thank you,

Becky Knight
Petersburg resident