



PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: November 1, 2021

AIDEA Board Approves to Accept, Receive HB 69 Funds for West Susitna Access Project Predevelopment Work

(Anchorage) – Wednesday, October 27, 2021, the Board for the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) authorized AIDEA to accept and receive \$8.5 million of state appropriated funds identified in HB 69.

Funds will be directed into AIDEA’s economic development account, under AS 44.88.172, for the advancement of predevelopment work for the West Susitna Access Road (WSAR) Project. WSAR is a proposed access and transportation corridor in the Mat-Su Borough that will open up the west side of Cook Inlet to responsible natural resource development. The intended route is approximately 100 miles long from the west end of Ayrshire Road to near the confluence of Portage Creek and the Skwentna River.

“Access is a common barrier to developing Alaska’s resources,” said **AIDEA Board Chair Dana Pruhs**. “With this funding from the legislature to advance predevelopment work, AIDEA can help facilitate access for the Mat-Su Borough to develop purpose-built infrastructure.”

Funds will be used to carry out the third and final phase of a feasibility analysis for initial predevelopment work. Scope includes the competitive procurement of a third-party contractor to assist AIDEA with the application process with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) and begin an environmental impact analysis through the National Environmental Protection Act (NEPA). AIDEA anticipates to have a third-party under contract in late December 2021 to assist in this process.

“This important project makes it possible to travel by road from the Point MacKenzie/Big Lake area to the millions of acres on the west side of the Susitna River, opening access to strategic minerals and known proven oil and gas reserves,” said **Alaska Governor Mike Dunleavy**. “That’s the role of government—building transportation infrastructure that leads to economic development while ensuring that those resources are developed responsibly.”

“Investing in access projects creates the infrastructure necessary to bring natural resources to market, which creates good-paying jobs for Alaskan families and generates local tax revenue that helps fund social and emergency services,” said **AIDEA Executive Director Alan Weitzner**

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is a public corporation of the state. AIDEA’s purpose is to promote, develop and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of Alaska. Since 1967, AIDEA has been responsible for directing more than \$3.5 billion in economic development in Alaska and has declared \$439.7 million in dividends to Alaska since 1997.

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