

Governor Steve Bullock
Office of the Governor
PO Box 200801
Helena, Montana 59620-0801

January 19, 2017

Re: Maclay Bridge & the Transportation Funding Dilemma

Dear Governor Bullock;

It has been some time since you have heard from Maclay Bridge Alliance (MBA) regarding replacement of this historic bridge. Since you last heard, Missoula County and Montana Department of Transportation have forged ahead with the replacement effort under a Categorical Exclusion to the NEPA/MEPA environmental analysis requirements. They are rapidly approaching the 30% design level for the proposed replacement, South Avenue Bridge.

In the mean-time, MBA has also continued to look for alternatives passed over by the county and MDT. We invited an experienced historic bridge engineer, Dr. Jai Kim, to come to Missoula to inspect Maclay Bridge and offer alternatives. We successfully pursued registration of the bridge on the National Register of Historic Places. And we have challenged the basic premises presented by MDT and Missoula County for replacement of the bridge. We looked at the daily traffic count from 1992 through 2016 and found, among other things, that the linear regression projects a line that is actually trending a gradual decline rather than the steep increase they predicted. Then we compared this to another badly needed MDT project at Big Fork with Flathead County. We found that MDT is supporting rehabilitation or replacement of the historic Big Fork Bridge with a single lane bridge, yet they tell us that Maclay Bridge is "not eligible." The daily traffic count at Big Fork exceeded Maclay Bridge at one point, but has since declined due to its poor condition. Maclay Bridge on the other hand remains in relatively good condition and is worthy of rehabilitation.

Our purpose in bringing this to your attention at this particularly busy time is that you have mentioned the possibility of reducing the transportation funding in Montana. We have heard the potential for reducing the number of state troopers on our highways, and we find that very disconcerting. We have also noted with considerable dismay, that the "Off-System Bridge Replacement Program" seems to offer no limits to the funds necessary for replacement of old county bridges. We have asked Missoula County and MDT to consider rehabilitation of Maclay Bridge for many reasons beyond the mere savings of millions of dollars. We simply do not want the additional traffic and associated hazards that a new bridge will impose on our residential areas. The county and MDT have blatantly ignored the Target Range Neighborhood Plan while insisting on a new multi-lane bridge.

We have attached a comparison of two rehabilitation proposals with the South Avenue Bridge. We hope this comparison will help you better understand some of

the reasons for our opposition as tax payers to South Avenue Bridge.

	SOUTH 1	REHAB 1	REHAB 1A
ESTIMATED COST	\$13.13 million	\$1-1.54 million	\$1.8-2.34 million
EMERGENCY VEHICLES	IMPROVED	IMPROVED	IMPROVED
FLOODPLAIN EFFECT	DAMAGE	NO IMPACT	NO IMPACT
RIVER HEALTH	DAMAGE	NO EFFECT	IMPROVED
MAJORITY COMMUNITY SUPPORT	NO	YES	YES
USEFUL LIFE	40 YRS	40 YRS	40 YRS
TRAFFIC SAFETY	NEGATIVE HI- SPEED	NO CHANGE	NO CHANGE
COMMUNITY SAFETY	NEGATIVE HI-TRAFFIC VOL.	NO CHANGE	NO CHANGE
CAT EX ADEQUATE	NO	YES	YES
EIS REQUIRED	YES	NO	NO
PRESERVE HISTORIC MACLAY BRIDGE	NO	YES	YES
OFF-SYSTEM BR. FUNDING	YES	BIG FORK BRIDGE EXAMPLE ?	
TA PROGRAM FUNDING 12/16/16 ANNOUNCEMENT	NO	YES?	YES?
FISCALLY VIABLE MATCHING FUNDS AVAILABLE	?	?	?
FUNDING FROM COUNTY BUDGET	YES	YES	YES

We would be pleased to meet, either with you or with Director Tooley, to expand on new information we have developed over the last six months. We can provide engineering reports from our historic bridge engineer consultant. We can show you the daily traffic count trends and 'wait times' at the single-lane Maclay Bridge. The majority of area residents have come to rely upon Maclay Bridge for the service it provides the community well beyond simply crossing the Bitterroot River. We feel this project is urgent because the county and their consultant will soon ask the state to commit to more than \$13 million for a new bridge that is unnecessary and unsupported by the majority of the community. Our consultant, Jim Parker, will soon be in touch with your office to set up a meeting to discuss new information and delivery of over 300 independent petitions to your office.

Very truly yours,
for Maclay Bridge Alliance

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