

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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**National Historic Bridge Expert to Discuss Maclay Bridge Rehab**

MISSOULA, MT – On Tuesday, September 20 there will be two opportunities for the public, elected officials, agency representatives and media to listen to Dr. Jai B. Kim’s review and analysis of Maclay Bridge and how it could be rehabilitated for further use. The first meeting will be held at 2:00 pm in the County Commissioner’s new meeting hall in the annex room 151 in the County Courthouse, and the second meeting will be at 7:00 pm on the same day at the Target Range Elementary School multi-media room on South Avenue.

Dr. Kim, PE, a Professor of Civil Engineering Emeritus at Bucknell University and his son Robert H. Kim, PE of BKLB Structural Engineers, Inc. will be coming to Missoula to inspect Maclay Bridge and then report to the public as to their findings.

Currently Missoula County is moving forward with a project to replace Maclay Bridge with a new bridge that would span the Bitterroot River with access off the end of the current dead-end section of South Avenue. The engineering firm, HDR, hired by the County for this project recently held their second public meeting where they came forward with their preferred alternative for the replacement bridge.

HDR’s preferred alternative “Alternate 1B” is estimated to cost \$13,130,000.00. This proposed new bridge will include two piers supporting the bridge placed within the river itself, just as the current Maclay Bridge currently does.

The local citizen’s group Maclay Bridge Alliance (MBA) who is advocating for the rehabilitation of the Maclay Bridge instead of building a new bridge was again disappointed with HDR’s findings.

According to Robert Schweitzer, a member of MBA, “We find it quite disconcerting that the ‘No Build Option’ touted during the Maclay Bridge Study is not offered as promised by Missoula County under the NEPA Categorical Exclusion process. This remains the most important omission for the majority of our neighborhood residents.”

Residents are ready to draw a line in the sand and say, ‘No more. Include Maclay Bridge as an alternative, and conduct a complete Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) to fully review the impacts of all the alternatives offered.’ If it becomes necessary, in spite of their attempts to avoid it, MBA will use their right for judicial review.

To insure that every step possible to avoid a lawsuit advances first MBA hired Dr. Jai Kim and his son to come to Missoula and verify, or not, the accuracy of the past Maclay Bridge studies stating that the bridge cannot be upgraded to safely carry all emergency vehicles, a contention that this whole project is depending on to be true in order to proceed towards building a new bridge.

Dr Kim will review the safety issues, the fracture critical issues, as well as other important factors during his visit to Missoula.

“We will discuss the method of arch-superimposed bridge rehabilitation with a scale model of arch reinforced Pratt truss bridge,” said Dr. Kim in advance of his visit to Missoula. “The rehabilitated bridge with pedestrian/bike way added will increase the load carrying capacity to an HS-20 live loading (36 tons), thereby removing the bridge’s structural deficiency status. By providing the structural redundancy and eliminating

"fracture critical" features of the bridge, the risk of collapse will be reduced and the bridge will be deemed 'safe' after the rehabilitation."

The discussion of a new bridge to replace Maclay Bridge has been around for years, if not decades. Last year three County Commissioners signed off to begin the project, being told that Maclay Bridge was obsolete and could not be considered for rehabilitation. MBA strongly disagrees.

Dr Kim continues, "The costs of the rehabilitation including 4 ft pedestrian/bike way are much less than a new bridge. The costs are estimated to be from \$ 3,000 to \$7,000 per lineal foot of bridge, or for the main span of 180 ft, the costs will range from \$540,000 to \$1,260,000. This method will require no new foundations and piers, if these are found to be sound and/or require only minimum repairs. The construction time will be much shorter than a new bridge."

"It's just not responsible not to consider rehabilitating Maclay Bridge," says Peggie Morrison, a member of MBA. "At least don't spend any more money on this over-priced and potentially unnecessary project until we hear from Dr. Kim. After all, if we're correct and it turns out that Maclay Bridge can be rehabilitated to meet all of the structural, safety, and emergency concerns cited as to why a new bridge is needed, we may be able to save our taxpayers millions and millions of dollars and end up with just the bridge we need, the one we already have."

"Other advantages of the rehabilitation," states Dr. Kim "are: during construction, there will be no disruption of commercial activities; no loss of business; and no need for the acquisition of new right-of-way properties; and no major modification of the bridge approaches."

Dr. Kim will be visiting Missoula September 18-21. After studying Maclay Bridge on site, he and his son will present their findings in two public meetings mentioned earlier. The public and the media are welcome to come to either or both of the public presentations. The presentation in the afternoon will be geared towards the public, interested organizations, agency representatives, and elected officials. The evening presentation will be geared to citizens and neighbors in the areas most affected by this proposed project.

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***MEDIA:** The Compressed Curriculum vitae of **Dr. JAI B. KIM** is attached for your files and interest.*