

March 21, 2024

Dear Mr. Mayor and Haines Borough Assembly Members,

Thank you for reading my letter. I had to arrive late at the last (March 11) Assembly meeting and was cut short during the second Public Comment section due to the end of the meeting. I am unable to attend this (March 26) meeting so I am submitting my comments for the packet.

1. I have only a few questions and concerns, but first I owe the assembly an apology for a statement I made at the Feb. 27 assembly meeting. Apparently it was construed that I called that entire assembly meeting a “clown show.” I did not mean for it to sound that way. I was only referring to the portion of the meeting in response to LCC’s presentation of a flawed alternative plan to the Lutak Dock rehabilitation design, misnaming their proposal as the “Original dock plan”. It wasn’t. The plan that is in place and moving forward IS the original plan. I found it interesting that part of their proposal included a Lifecycle Analysis that the Assembly later sent on for review to be included in the EA if appropriate. It was reviewed by the experts and licensed engineers working on the EA and was considered a biased review that didn’t withstand the rigors of analysis. **So tell me: How many other flaws were there in that LCC proposal?**

I was also referring to the discussion afterwards when there was talk of “mysterious packages appearing on desks; and when there was some vigorous support of the LCC proposal—A motion was nearly made to adopt it!—without vetting, public input, etc. That’s the only part of that meeting I was calling a “clown show”.

So tell me: When are you going to schedule a representative from the borough to explain to the public exactly what the Lutak Dock project does and does not entail, and address misinformation and myths that are spreading around town?

2. Speaking of myths—Mega Dock. I have been hearing this term a lot lately. **So tell me: Since when, and how, did the dock that we have ALWAYS had become MEGA?** This project is changing **neither** the size of nor the infrastructure on the dock.

3. The Ro-Ro: It failed once and it is only a matter of time before it does so again. The last time it failed, it just happened that heavy equipment with operators were on the dock. The experienced operators jumped in the machines and saved the ro-ro. This is the part of the story left out when we are told that AML and the Fuel barges figured out how to make do when the Ro-Ro failed. Equipment and operators are not stored on the dock. Next time they won’t be around to save the day. **So tell me: What are your plans to save the Ro-Ro the next time it fails?**

4. I found a CVN article in the Feb 29th paper most disturbing. It indicated that Natalie Dawson apparently “sees the possibility of scrapping the entire project—including the \$20 million grant—and restarting the process.” “there is no rush” she says. There are at least 2 flaws to these statements:

1. It has been determined that the dock could suffer a catastrophic failure at any time. This would cause an unknown amount of pollutants to pour into Lutak Inlet. It would require millions to mitigate—unknown millions of dollars that would burden this town. **So tell me: What is your plan if the dock suffers this Catastrophic failure during that time when “there is no rush” to complete the rehab?**

2. Referring to a statement I was recently told: “Gobs of money” **never** “Falls from the sky upon us.” This grant money and the \$3.2 million match from the Alaska legislature took **years of determination, persistence and perseverance** including **multiple** grant applications to receive. To throw this away because a few people for some reason don’t like the dock design is worse than ludicrous. It is fiscally irresponsible.

Fiscal responsibility is part of the oath you take when you accept a seat on the assembly and the mayorship.

There is not a dock design out there anywhere that will satisfy everyone. This design moving forward is not creating anything more than what we have had since the dock was built over 70 years ago. It wasn't an issue until recently. Why, if it is such a problem, did nobody speak up during the 8-10+ YEARS of planning? THEN was the time, not now after all is planned, money put into place, and we are moving forward. It is incumbent on this assembly to remind those who are crying that "plans were changed at the last minute"—that NO, they were NOT! The switch to the rubble pile design was a desperation plan that we thought we could afford. The plan in place is BACK to the original plan which is to simply encapsulate and stabilize the failing dock and give it a new face for boats to tie up to. Encapsulating means that whatever potential pollutants are in those cells won't be released into the Inlet. Removing the existing dock runs the risk of releasing who knows what into the Inlet.

5. At the March 12 meeting you voted to add a third alternative design to the EA draft that has a smaller footprint than both the current encapsulation design and the alternative rubble mound design. It is an idea that has no plans let alone any engineering designs. The "consultants can work with the manager and through us with additional questions for clarification of exactly what that alternative looks like." According to Natalie Dawson, who proposed this undefined option, it does not have to delay the permitting process by more than a few weeks. Every delay is one step closer to losing this whole project. **So tell me: Is that the plan, to step by step lose the project? Also, what gives you the right to just make up a plan with no input from anyone in the public? You may be the governing body of this town, but you are required to go through a public process.**

Be the responsible assembly that you were voted in to be. This project is in the midst of a very detailed and designated process. Let it happen. Stop bowing to people who want to torpedo this project because they want to tie this dock to a potential mine and transporting ore, and **refuse** to understand this is not an ore dock. Stop trying to speed up, slow down, change horses, or tell the agencies involved how to do things. Don't demand the manager to do so either.

Support the Lutak Dock rehabilitation project as is. This dock repair is critical to the long term health of our valley!

6. I also have a question for Assembly member Natalie Dawson. According to the Alaska Venture Fund website, you are working for them as Director of Strategic Partnerships. On this website, I learned that:

["Setting big ideas into motion."](#)

"Social change leaders have big plans for Alaska. To get them there, we provide administrative and operational support, access to an extensive network of advisors, and the expertise they need to forge ahead."

Also on this website:

"Progress: A large mine threatens the Jilkáat Aani Ka Héeni. We're funding advocacy to protect this region from industrial development and promote sustainable, resilient communities for generations to come."

["Jilkáat Aani Ka Héeni" \(Chilkat River Watershed\) Fund](#)

[DONATE"](#)

copied and pasted from the Alaska Venture site.

The dock repair project only became an issue after the dock was erroneously tied to the potential mine as an ore dock. This is no secret.

The fighting over the dock is because of a potential mine which the company who pays your wages is using as a reason to raise money. Every time you propose a delay tactic; help with a diversionary tactic; support a different design; etc., you are indirectly supporting your paycheck. **This is a huge conflict of interest.** So, my question is: **Natalie, when are you going to stop trying to undermine the dock project and recuse yourself on all votes regarding the dock, apparently one of the sources of your paycheck?**

Thank you all for reading my letter and considering my questions. I would love to hear good defensible answers to each.

Cynthia Jones (CJ)



alaskaventure.org



The screenshot shows the 'OUR TEAM' section of the Alaska Venture Fund website. On the left is a circular profile picture of Natalie Dawson, a woman with a red cap and a blue jacket, smiling. To the right of the photo, the text reads: 'OUR TEAM', 'Natalie Dawson', 'TEAM MEMBER', and 'Director of Strategic Partnerships | natalie@alaskaventure.org'. Below this is a 'Biography' section that begins with 'Dr. Natalie Dawson is a wildlife biologist and educator with over'. The website header includes the 'Alaska Venture Fund' logo and navigation links for 'Approach', 'Solutions', 'Ventures', 'Perspectives', and 'About', along with a 'DONATE' button.



The screenshot shows the homepage of the Jilkáat Aani Ka Héeni (Chilkat River Watershed) Fund. The background is an aerial view of a river winding through a forest with autumn foliage. The text on the page includes: 'Jilkáat Aani Ka Héeni (Chilkat River Watershed) Fund' with a 'DONATE' button, 'Protecting natural habitats and promoting sustainable futures.', and 'Supporting Indigenous-led stewardship of lands and waters in Southeast Alaska's Jilkáat (Chilkat) valley.' A paragraph on the right states: 'Led by the Jilkáat Kwaan (people of the Chilkat) and community allies, we are supporting the protection of the Jilkáat Aani Ka Héeni (Chilkat river watershed) and promoting sustainable futures for our home communities through civic engagement, advocacy, community education, and conservation.'

The crossroads of culture and conversation

Place: Jilkáat Aani K̄a Héeni is home to all five species of Pacific Salmon, the world's largest congregation of bald eagles, and downstream of the world's largest protected area and UNESCO World Heritage Site.

People: Jilkáat Kwaan are the stewards since time immemorial of 2.6 million acres of lands and waters including the entirety of Jilkáat Aani K̄a Héeni.

Progress: A large mine threatens the Jilkáat Aani K̄a Héeni. We're funding advocacy to protect this region from industrial development and promote sustainable, resilient communities for generations to come.



How you can help

[Donate to the Jilkáat Aani K̄a Héeni Fund](#)



The Chilkat Fund is hosted by Alaska Venture Fund (AVF). AVF is a project of the New Venture Fund, a nationwide platform and registered 501(c)(3) charitable organization.