

Kiersten Long

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Sent: Monday, March 25, 2024 9:04 AM
To: Kiersten Long
Subject: Lutak Dock comments to be included in Borough Assembly packet 3/26/24

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March 24, 2024

Dear Haines Borough Assembly and Mayor,

I am fully in support of minimizing the scope of the Lutak dock project to reflect what the true community needs are for this important facility. We need a dock design similar to the R&M design '3B' from 2017, modified to accommodate freight and fuel delivery. The design does not need to accommodate a roll-on-roll-off ramp, as that has already been installed and is functioning well. However, the face of the new dock does need to allow for the efficient tie up of barges that currently deliver freight via that ramp.

It is very important that we have a dock designed to provide for the safe transfer of fuel. A spill in Lutak Inlet could be catastrophic for our salmon and hooligan runs, as well as for the Lutak ecosystem as a whole.

In planning for the dock reconstruction, we need to consider the true long-term value of healthy commercial and subsistence fisheries in Lutak Inlet and the Chilkoot River watershed, and not build a facility that intentionally attracts industrial uses.

A simplified design that provided strong steel piling dolphins, a connecting catwalk, and a reinforced fuel line support route would provide all that this community needs. A dock of this scale would have significantly less environmental impact than either the Turnagain steel wall design or the slightly smaller rock fill design (the 2021 design) inserted into the Environmental Assessment (EA) process by the Borough Manager in December.

The Borough Assembly's recently passed motion directing the Manager to include a smaller rip rap based, no bulkhead dock design alternative in the Environmental Assessment was an excellent step to move this process forward. The simplified design provides a reasonable alternative that will actually meet the NEPA requirements. Since this design will impact the environment less than the other two alternatives, its impacts should already be substantially included within the EA as currently written and there is no logical or procedural reason for this addition to slow the NEPA process.

In fact, by requiring the removal of most of the old fill in the current Army dock, the simplified design will actually clean up the existing site and provide a net benefit to Lutak Inlet. It will prevent the slow leakage of toxins that may currently be within the existing dock fill. Turnagain's current design will do nothing to stop the flow of potential toxins into Lutak Inlet, and if the EA tries to claim otherwise (through the sham concept of "encapsulation"), it will likely be rejected during the NEPA process. The simplified rip rap dock design will also greatly reduce the amount of new steel placed along the shoreline and allow for the restoration of some of the productive intertidal habitat that makes Lutak Inlet so valuable.

There has been a very obvious attempt by the previous Borough Assembly and the current Borough Administration to lock the dock design into a large-scale project that reflects the needs of corporate – and sometimes foreign -industrial growth proponents rather than the true needs of the citizens of Haines. As one of those citizens, I have watched with amazement as the current Borough administration's manipulative actions and false statements have been revealed time and again. You need to look through this intentional haze of misinformation and do what is right for this community. We do not need to saddle our children with the high cost of maintaining an industrial dock. We cannot allow blatant lies and threats of loss of funding (through intentional delays, no less) to drive us to make a major expenditure we do not need.

Thank you for your continued work for the good of this community.

Mark Sogge