

A Resolution of the Haines Borough Assembly Supporting Restoration of U.S. Department of Transportation funding for reconstruction of the Haines Road and Alaska Highway, otherwise known as the Northwest Highway System or Shakwak Program.

WHEREAS, the Alaska Highway and Haines Road, collectively known as the Northwest Highway System, were constructed by the United States government during World War II for defense against a Japanese invasion; and

WHEREAS, in 1945, after the war, the Northwest Highway System was transferred to Canada but the northern section of the Alaska Highway and the Haines Road soon fell into disrepair and, since these highways were important to the United States and Alaska, discussions between Canada and the U.S. commenced on upgrading the northern sections; and

WHEREAS, in 1977, the Shakwak Agreement was signed by the Canadian and United States governments, the Agreement set out the terms and conditions for the upgrading and maintenance of 325 miles of highway, and the goal of the Shakwak Program was and continues to be the reconstruction of the North Alaska Highway and the Haines Road to a modern, all-weather two-lane paved highway to be funded by the United States with year round maintenance to be funded by Canada; and

WHEREAS, these highways are instrumental to trade, tourism, jobs, access to medical care, energy and mineral development and are critical to the transport of goods between Alaska and the lower 48 States; and

WHEREAS, a viable and safe Northwest Highway System is vital to local economic development in Haines and the Borough's plans to develop Port Lutak as a deep water port; and

WHEREAS, deterioration of the Northwest Highway System due to lack of U.S. funding could influence Canadian decision-making on transport of minerals and ore mined in the Yukon Territory using Haines as an access and shipment center; and


WHEREAS, to pay for U.S. obligations under the Shakwak Agreement, Federal Department of Transportation program funds have been authorized in surface transportation legislation since 1973, the most recent being in Public Law 109-59 (SAFETEA-LU) and its subsequent short-term extensions; and

WHEREAS, the Congress failed to reauthorize funds in Public Law 112-141 (MAP-21), thereby jeopardizing reconstruction of the highway and its operations,

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Haines Borough Assembly requests that the Alaska Delegation make restoration of Shakwak Program funding a high priority during consideration of reauthorization of Federal transportation legislation in the 113th Congress.

Adopted by a duly-constituted quorum of the Haines Borough Assembly this 8th day of January, 2013.

Attest:


Julie Cozzi, MMC, Borough Clerk




Stephanie Scott, Borough Mayor