

Conf. Rk. - Alaska
re: Alaska FH Hwy. 8/10

23-10

OCT 22 1959

Honorable H. L. Bartlett
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Bartlett:

Reference is made to the September 30 letter from Mrs. Margery G. Smith, Executive Secretary of your office, addressed to Mr. William J. Miami, our regional engineer at Juneau, Alaska, relative to the completion and paving of the Sterling Highway between Homer and Soldotna.

We appreciate the interest in the proposed improvement of this road, as indicated by the residents in signing a petition relative to this matter.

Your letter makes reference to Mr. Miami's letter of September 9 to Governor Egan and questions whether or not some later plans may have been developed to provide temporary relief until the program set forth in this letter may be fulfilled. As previously advised, it is anticipated that future Federal-aid apportionments for highways will provide a substantial increase in funds to the State of Alaska which should result in a stepped-up program for the improvement of the Sterling Highway. We have been assured that improvements between Homer and Soldotna are included in the current plans. A 19-mile section between Homer and Anchor River is now under active reconstruction. The remaining 60 miles north from Anchor River to Soldotna are planned for reconstruction in the summer of 1960 with completion in 1961. It is anticipated that paving will start in 1961 and be completed in 1962. Paving northward from Homer may be possible in late 1960. This schedule is a very tight one and is contingent on satisfactory progress in acquisition of the necessary rights-of-way which is becoming an increasingly difficult problem in Alaska. Owners are placing greater value on their holdings and in many instances are requiring the State to resort to the time-consuming process of condemnation.

- 2 -

Considering the magnitude of the improvements contemplated, we cannot see where such work between Homer and Soldotna can be further advanced. We, however, can assure you that the Alaska program will be given close attention and every effort will be made in order to maintain a reasonable construction schedule in this area.

We trust that the above information provides a satisfactory reply to your September 30 letter, however, if additional information is desired we shall be pleased to advise you further upon receipt of your request.

Sincerely yours,

Paul F. Royster
Assistant to the
Federal Highway Administrator

U.L.
CALewis:tb
Control No. PR-5164 (10/21/59)
cc: Files (2)
Federal Hwy. Projs. Div. ✓
Mr. W. J. Niemi (2-cc)
Mr. B. D. Tallamy
Mr. E. L. Armstrong
Mr. Royster - Room 814
CC Unit - Room 810

Cleared Through
Administrator's Conference

BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Paul F. Royster, Assistant Commissioner
23-00 for Operations, Washington, D. C.

DATE: October 15, 1959

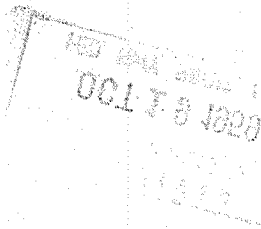
FROM : Wm. J. Niemi, Regional Engineer
10-00.21 Juneau, Alaska

SUBJECT: Congressional Correspondence Regarding Improvement of Sterling Highway

Attached is copy of letter dated September 30, 1959 from the Executive Secretary of Senator Bartlett's office concerning a petition by 248 residents along the Sterling Highway for improvement of the highway between Homer and Soldotna.

A copy of the September 9 letter to Governor Egan, which contained an outline of our plans for improving this section of the Sterling Highway, was forwarded to your office. Considering the magnitude of the improvement contemplated, the schedule noted in my letter of September 9 is optimistic and at this time I cannot see where it can be advanced further. Accordingly, it is suggested that in your reply to Senator Bartlett's letter my previous statements with respect to the planned reconstruction of this road should be reiterated.

Attachment
As noted above



PR-5164

WARREN G. MAGNUSON, WASH., CHAIRMAN
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 HUGH SCOTT, PA.

EDWARD JARRETT, CHIEF CLERK

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON INTERSTATE AND FOREIGN COMMERCE

September 30, 1959

Mr. William J. Niemi,
 Regional Engineer,
 Bureau of Public Roads,
 Federal Building,
 Juneau, Alaska

Dear Mr. Niemi:

I am writing you at this time as Mr. Bartlett is away from Washington.

A communication has come into the office from Mr. A. H. Thomack of Clam Gulch. With his letter Mr. Thomack enclosed a petition calling for the immediate completion and paving of the Sterling Highway between Homer and Soldatna signed by 248 residents of that area. As you know, from previous correspondence Mr. Bartlett has had with you and Mr. Downing on this general subject we have had made available to us the letter you addressed to Governor Egan on September 9. In replying to Mr. Thomack I supplied him with copy of that letter. The question which now occurs to me is whether or not you may have any later plans which would provide temporary relief until fulfillment of the long-term program set forth in your letter to the Governor has been executed. Any information you may be able to give me will be most deeply appreciated.

Sincerely yours, ,

Mrs. Margery G. Smith
 Executive Secretary

PR 5164

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→ 2

P. O. Box 1961
Juneau, Alaska

10-00.21

October 15, 1959

The Honorable E. L. Bartlett
United States Senate
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Senator Bartlett:

Please refer to letter of September 30, 1959 written to this office by Mrs. Margery G. Smith, Executive Secretary, during your absence, and which concerns the Sterling Highway between Homer and Soldotna.

In accordance with established policy your inquiry is being directed to our Washington Office for reply.

Very truly yours,

Wm. J. Niemi
Regional Engineer

cc: Mr. Royster ✓
Wash., DC

PR 5164

23-10

OCT 26 1953

Honorable Ernest Gruening
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Gruening:

Reference is made to your letter of October 19 relative to the maintenance of the Sterling Highway in Alaska, between Soldotna and Homer, as performed by the Bureau of Public Roads.

We have noted the criticisms pertaining to these operations as expressed by Mr. Homer S. Thompson, Manager of the Kenai Peninsula Public Utility District No. 1 at Homer. In this regard, and with particular reference to a recent inspection of highway conditions in this area, it is believed you will be interested in the following report relative thereto.

Our regional engineer at Juneau, accompanied by our division engineer from Anchorage and the Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Public Works, on September 21 made a personal inspection of the gravel-surfaced highway between Soldotna and Homer, a distance of approximately 79 miles. As this inspection was on a Monday, it followed two days of inactivity by the maintenance forces. The surface, therefore, was not expected to be in the best possible condition. On the contrary, however, the road surface was found to be in good condition and it was possible to drive the entire distance comfortably at a speed of 40 to 50 miles per hour. The Commissioner commented on the excellence of the maintenance of this highway.

We are advised that neither the Anchorage division office nor the regional office at Juneau has received any letters from the local citizens complaining about the maintenance between Soldotna and Homer. Some difficulties, however, within the 19-mile section under active construction between Homer and Anchor River may have been reported. In this area, during a period of three days last summer, heavy rains (one of 30 hours duration) made a section extremely soft for passenger automobiles and some assistance was required to keep traffic moving. This section was approximately 1,500 feet long, and no detour could be provided. When the roadbed became sufficiently dry, this section was overlaid with gravel as a normal part of construction operations and further serious trouble eliminated.

← Cong. Bk. - Alaska
* Alaska P. H. General
X Maintenance - Subj. File

At the time of the above-mentioned inspection, there were no apparent deficiencies in the maintenance operations being performed in this area. It should be recognized, however, that where active construction operations are in progress and detours are not feasible, some delay in travel might be expected. We regret that the possibility of any delay exists, but where no other route is available, we have no choice in the matter. Our project engineers and maintenance crews have been alerted to the need for reducing delays and inconveniences to a minimum, and we believe that our field personnel are supported in these efforts by the greater portion of the traveling populace.

We trust that the above presents a satisfactory report of the conditions found in the area in question, however, if additional information is desired, we shall be pleased to advise you further upon receipt of your request.

Sincerely yours,

Paul F. Royster
Assistant to the
Federal Highway Administrator

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CALewis:bj
Control No. PR 5167 (10/26/59)
cc: Files (2)
Federal Highway Projects Division
Mr. W. J. Niemi (2)
Mr. B. D. Tallamy
Mr. E. L. Armstrong
Mr. Royster - Room 814
CC Unit - Room 810

Administrative Unit
10/26/59

ERNEST GRUENING
ALASKA

HOME ADDRESS:
Box 1001
JUNEAU, ALASKA

GEORGE SUNDBORG
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

HERBERT W. BEASER
LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C.

October 19, 1959

Mr. Paul F. Royster
Assistant to the Federal Highway
Administrator
Bureau of Public Roads
U. S. Dept. of Commerce
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Royster:

With further reference to the matter about which you wrote Senator Gruening on October 9th, namely the plans of the Bureau of Public Roads to complete paving of the Sterling Highway from Soldatna to Homer, I would like to send you some information just received from the Kenai Peninsula. I do this in the absence of Senator Gruening who is still traveling abroad with the Senate subcommittee.

Mr. Homer S. Thompson, manager of Kenai Peninsula Public Utility District No. 1 at Homer, Alaska, has written to the Senator as follows:

" If ever an agency of the Federal Government has been incompetent in its assigned mission, that of the maintenance of the gravelled highway between Soldatna and Homer, Alaska, we have a prize example.

" It is most noticeable that where little or no maintenance is accomplished by the Bureau, the road is in better condition, but when these BPR road maintainers get to the road, we find the large boulders piled in the center of the road, burms left in the road, snow piled 4 feet deep in front of residents driveways, ditches running over with water due to lack of ditch clearance of weeds, many blind corners due to the failure of the department to remove such hazards as trees, and weeds and I could go on and on.

" It seems reasonable to draw the conclusion that the Bureau of Public Roads have few if any standards of maintenance or performance of maintenance, and incredibly, that local, regional and division

PR 5167

supervision is either indifferent or unaware of the existing deficiencies.

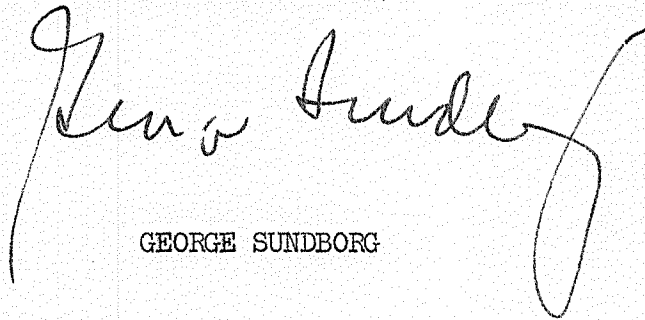
" Hardly a day goes by that some resident traveling the Sterling Highway in his vehicle doesn't pick up a piece of grader blade to destroy a \$35.00 to \$50.00 tire. The simple operator maintenance of removing curled up pieces of steel on the grader blade prior to operation of the grader is apparently not performed.

" From a personal standpoint, I make about (10) ten trips per year to Anchorage by vehicle over the Sterling Highway, and almost without exception, this 80 mile stretch of highway costs me one tire and tube to a value of \$42.00.

" As Senator Gruening pointed out in his letter of 2 September, 1959 to Mr. Niemi, we do not look forward with anticipation of four more seasons of the same conditions now prevailing."

We hope that the recent inspection visit which Mr. William J. Niemi, your regional engineer at Juneau, made to the Kenai Peninsula will result in correction of this unfortunate situation.

Sincerely yours,



GEORGE SUNDBORG

PR 5167

816 Office Memorandum • BUREAU OF PUBLIC ROADS
 UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Mr. Paul F. Royster, Assistant Commissioner
 23-00 for Operations, Washington, D. C.

DATE: September 29, 1959

FROM : Wm. J. Niemi, Regional Engineer
 10-00 Juneau, Alaska *WJN*

SUBJECT: Congressional Correspondence -- Senator Ernest Gruening

*sent encl 9/21
 PR 5013*

Senator Ernest Gruening's letter of September 14, 1959, and my interim reply of September 17 pertain to maintenance of the Sterling highway to Homer, Alaska.

In company with Richard A. Downing, Commissioner, Alaska Department of Public Works, and M. C. Zimmerman, Division Engineer, Bureau of Public Roads, Anchorage Division, I made a personal inspection on September 21 of the gravel-surfaced Sterling highway between Homer and Soldotna, a distance of 79 miles. We found the surface maintenance good and it was possible to drive the entire distance comfortably at a speed of 40 to 50 miles per hour. The date of inspection fell on Monday following two days of inactivity by the maintenance forces during the weekend so the road should have been at its worst condition. Commissioner Downing commented on the excellence of the maintenance and we concur in this observation.

Neither the Anchorage Division office nor Regional headquarters has received any letters of complaint about the maintenance between Homer and Soldotna. It was assumed that perhaps some difficulty had been experienced by travelers in the past on the 19-mile section under construction between Homer and Anchor River. The project engineer stated that during a period of 3 days this summer heavy rains, one of 30 hours' duration, made a section of the construction zone extremely soft for passenger automobiles and some assistance was required to keep traffic moving. There were no detours possible at the point where the trouble occurred, a section about 1500 feet long. When the roadbed dried out sufficiently the section was overlaid with gravel as a normal part of construction and further serious trouble eliminated.

We have the feeling that the complaints to the Senator are intended primarily to hasten the paving of the section of the Sterling highway between Soldotna and Homer. Your letter of September 18, 1959, to Senator Gruening realistically outlined the construction program which is contemplated for improving and paving this last section of the Sterling highway. It is a very tight schedule because of the seasonality of Alaska construction but we shall make every attempt to meet it.

We regret the need for passing traffic through an active construction zone during the improvement of roads but there is no choice in most

Mr. Royster

-2-

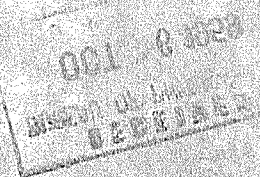
September 29, 1959

of Alaska where no detours are available. Our project engineers and maintenance crews have been alerted to the need for reducing inconvenience to a minimum and we believe we are supported in these efforts by the bulk of the traveling populace. The attached copy of a letter along these lines may be of timely interest.

Since there was no need to correct any deficiencies in maintenance my interim reply of September 17 to Senator Gruening may be sufficient. We shall defer to your judgment in that regard.

Attachment 1

(c ltr 8/31/59 BPR fm S/Sgt. John P. Howes, Elmendorf AFB)



DEPT. OF COMMERCE
U.S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE
RICHARD L. NEUMANN, GOV.
JEROME R. HANCOCK, VICE
SARGENT & MCLELLAN, INC.
WASHINGTON, D. C.

W.K.
E.G.W.
M.H.
Congressional Bk. - Alaska
X Alaska FH Gen.
X Subj. file - maintenance

P. O. Box 1961
Juneau, Alaska

10-00

September 17, 1959

The Honorable Ernest Gruening
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

My dear Senator Gruening:

Your letter of September 14, 1959, reports another complaint regarding the maintenance of the Homer highway, now under extensive reconstruction in preparation for paving.

I will make a personal inspection of the road during a field trip to that area on September 21. Any deficiencies that are correctable will receive my personal attention at the site. If this investigation reveals a situation that requires a further report, you will be advised through our Washington office.

Sincerely yours,

Wm. J. Niemi
Regional Engineer

cc: Mr. Royster, Washington office, w/c Senator Gruening's ltr 9/14

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

SEP 23 11 55 AM '59

U.S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE

PR 5013

copy 100,
for file sep 21st
100 100000 sep 14

10-00

miss
b. c. de

W. J. Niemi
100 100000

FRANCIS CASE, S. DAK.
 THOMAS E. MARTIN, IOWA
 JOHN SHERMAN COOPER, KY.
 HUGH SCOTT, PA.
 WINSTON L. PROUTY, VT.
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 FRANK E. MOSS, UTAH

United States Senate

COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC WORKS

IRVING E. MOORE, CHIEF CLERK

I	A	TO	INT.
1		R.E.	WJM
		A.R.E.	
		ADM.	
2	✓	C. & M.	
		DES.	
		P. & R.	
3			

September 14, 1959

Mr. William J. Niemi
 Regional Engineer
 Bureau of Public Roads
 Federal Building
 Juneau, Alaska

Dear Bill:

I have another complaint about the condition of the Homer highway, and I hope that you will take some real action to improve the situation and not merely note that the protests exist.

Cordially yours,

ERNEST GRUENING

PR 5013

23-10

OCT 9 1959

Honorable Ernest Gruening
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Gruening:

Reference is made to Mr. Sundborg's letter of September 29 enclosing a petition signed by 274 residents of the Kenai Peninsula urging that work on the paving between Homer and Soldotna be expedited.

We appreciate the indicated interest in the planned reconstruction of this section. Recent communication from our regional engineer at Juneau advises that our letter to you under date of September 18 realistically outlined the construction program for improving and paving this last section of the Sterling Highway. We recognize that this is a very tight schedule because of the seasonality of Alaska construction, however, we shall make every effort to meet this schedule.

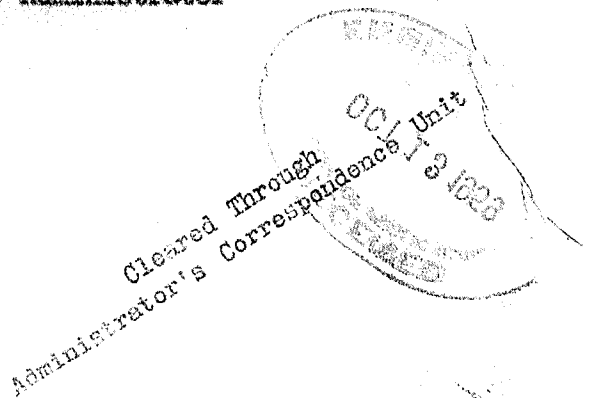
A copy of your September 29 letter, with enclosure, and of this reply have been furnished our regional office at Juneau. If additional information is later desired, we shall be pleased to advise you further upon receipt of your request.

Sincerely yours,

Paul F. Royster
Assistant to the
Federal Highway Administrator

Enclosure

CA Lewis:nk
Control No. PR-5067 (10/9/59)
cc - Files (2)
Federal Hwy. Projs. Div. ✓
Mr. W. J. Niemi (2-cc)
Mr. B. D. Tallamy
Mr. E. L. Armstrong
CC Unit
Mr. Royster



ERNEST GRUENING
ALASKA

HOME ADDRESS:
Box 1001
JUNEAU, ALASKA

United States Senate
WASHINGTON, D.C.

GEORGE SUNDBORG
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

HERBERT W. BEASER
LEGISLATIVE ASSISTANT

September 29, 1959

Mr. Paul F. Royster
Assistant to the Federal
Highway Administrator
Bureau of Public Roads
Washington 25, D. C.

Dear Mr. Royster:

In the absence of Senator Gruening, who is traveling in Russia with a Senate subcommittee, I wish to acknowledge your letter of September 18th which deals with the plans of the Bureau of Public Roads to complete the paving of the Sterling Highway.

Senator Gruening has just received a petition signed by 274 residents of the Kenai Peninsula urging that work on the paving between Homer and Soldatna be expedited. This petition, which we think indicates considerable dissatisfaction with the performance of the BPR in that part of Alaska, is enclosed.

We ask that the expression of these constituents be considered and that you do, as you indicate in your September 18th letter is your intention, step up the program for improvement of the Sterling Highway.

Sincerely yours,

George Sundborg
GEORGE SUNDBORG

Enclosure

PR 5064

93-10

Honorable Ernest Gruening
United States Senate
Washington, D. C.

Dear Senator Gruening:

Your letter of September 2, 1959, to Regional Engineer William J. Hiehl, Juneau, Alaska, concerning the improvement and paving of the Sterling Highway on the Kenai Peninsula, has been forwarded to this office for reply.

It is anticipated that future Federal-aid appropriations for highways under the full formula will provide a substantial increase in funds to the State of Alaska. This should result in a stepped-up program for improvement of the Sterling Highway, and we have been assured that this is in the current plans.

The Sterling Highway is now paved from the Seward-Anchorage Highway to Soldotna, a distance of 60 miles. There remains 70 miles of unpaved road between Soldotna and Homer of which a 10-mile section between Homer and Anchor River is now under active reconstruction. The remaining 60 miles north from Anchor River to Soldotna is planned for reconstruction in the summer of 1960 with completion in 1961. It is anticipated that paving will start in 1961 and be completed in 1962. The foregoing schedule is a very tight one and is contingent on satisfactory progress in acquisition of the necessary right-of-way which is becoming an increasingly difficult problem in Alaska. Owners are placing greater value on their holdings and in many instances are requiring the State to resort to the time consuming process of condemnation.

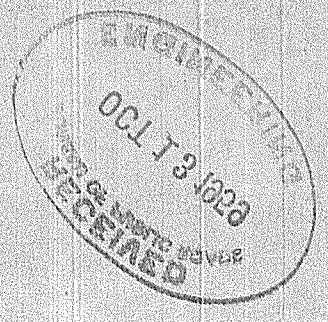


The attached copy of the above mentioned report will be placed in your file for information in order to maintain a complete record of the matter. The report shows the above information provided in satisfactory reply to your letter, however, if additional information is desired, the Bureau will advise you through the Bureau and further your receipt of your receipt.

Sincerely yours,

Frank F. Snyder
Assistant to the
National Highway Administrator

SA Lewis
Control No. 73-1980 (9/17/59)
cc - Files (2)
Federal Hwy. Proj. Div.
Mr. V. J. Blasi (Info)
Mr. H. D. Talley
Mr. H. J. Armstrong
DC Unit - Room 510
Mr. Snyder - Room 514



PETITION

For the immediate completion and paving of the Sterling Highway between Homer and Soldotna.

We the undersigned Merchants and Peoples served by said Highway do hereby Petition and Demand that our Senators and Congressmen to take immediate and necessary action to expedite this matter.

Oliver R. Wiley Clam Gulch, Alaska
W. T. Roberts Kenai Alaska

Mrs W. T. Roberts, Kenai, Alaska
Ock Heager Soldotna Alaska

Bruce O. Olsen Anchorage, Alaska

Reginald G. Wood Clam Gulch
John J. Mills Anchorage, Alaska
C. J. Means Anchorage Alaska.

Mrs. P. G. Means " "
John Sanford " "

D. J. Finck Anchorage
Carl A. Swanson Kenai, Alaska

Martha L. Sdall Spennard, Alaska

David V. Hansen Spennard
Anchorage, Alaska.

John Johnson Anchorage Alaska
Janne Johnson
Watts E. Gould Olay, Maine

Holman Dottle Anchorage Anchorage

Vida B. Wiley Clam Gulch Alaska

RECEIVED
OCT 10 1920
U.S. DEPT. OF COMMERCE
BUREAU OF MARITIME COMMERCE

PETITION

For the immediate completion and paving of the Sterling-Hyway between Homer and Soldotna.

We the undersigned Merchants and Peoples served by said Hyway do hereby Petition and Demand that our Senators and Congressmen do take immediate and necessary action to expedite this matter.

David M. Morse

H. K. Davis

Edgar W. Owenlin
William S. Waddell

Olaf M. Anderson

Larry Edmondson

Carl Bair

Karl L. Bair

Ralph E. Miller

Harry E. Vick

Harold Harrington

Frank Loos

Robert Gisham

Norman Dieckhoff

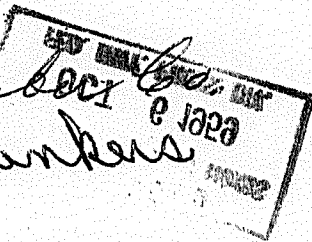
John H. Heston

Frank J. White

A. H. Bachman

Homer Lumber Co.

Charles W. Munkers



Joe Washen
 Glen Washen
 W. H. Christman
 Mary Chieslak
 Charles J. Payton
 William Shurbidge
 Peter Madsen
 Mrs Grace C. Hatton
 Mr & Mrs. Robt. L. Clay
 Mrs Dorothy E. Hermanson
 Mr & Mrs. Jerryp T. Sims
 L. K. Hines
 Raymond C. Burton
 Mrs & Mrs Tony Correia
 Joseph Megargel
 Lillian E. Dettling
 Ralph E. Dettling

Seward, Alaska
 Seward Alaska
 Homer Alaska
 Cohoe, Alaska
 Cohoe Alaska
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OCT 9 1920
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PETITION

For the immediate completion and paving of the Sterling-Hyway between Homer and Soldotna,

We the undersigned Merchants and peoples served by said Hyway do hereby Petition ~~and demand~~ that our Senators and Congressmen do take immediate and necessary action to expedite this matter.

Elfrida Lewis	Cohoe, Alaska
Chas. Mockrid	" "
Carolyn Nichols	Cohoe, Alaska
Cynthia O. Miller	Cohoe Alaska
Eugene J. Smith	Cohoe Alaska
Gordon J. Hermanson	Cohoe Alaska
Karla Hines	Cohoe, Alaska
Ethel V. Sims	" "
Chas. Lewis	" "
Carl E. Johnson	" "
Karin Johnson	" "
Lawrence E. Lidauy Sr.	" "
Mike Benton	" "
Wilbur A. Tri	" "
Mary A. Smith	" "
H. P. Jensen	" "
Robert Olson	" "
Herman R. Hermanson	" "

RECEIVED
 FEB 8 1928
 U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 BUREAU OF LANDS

PETITION

For the immediate completion and paving of the Sterling-Hyway between Homer and Soldotna.

We the undersigned Merchants and Peoples served by said Hyway do hereby Petition and Demand that our Senators and Congressmen do take immediate and necessary action to expedite this matter.

Martin Golemon
Boyd 160 Noymer
Bill Dudley
Triple A Service Sta
on charge
Kenneth R. Bailey
W. Veis - Gen. Pres.

Handwritten scribbles and initials

NEW YORK
OCT 10 1953
GENERAL DELIVERY UNIT
RECEIVED