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Preferred Alternative Identified for the Sterling Highway Milepost 45-60 Project

(Anchorage)—The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) have identified the **G South Alternative** as the preferred alternative for the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project near Cooper Landing.

The G South Alternative would construct 5.5 miles of new alignment skirting north of Cooper Landing, reconnecting with the existing alignment near MP 52. This alternative would construct two new bridges, one over lower Juneau Creek and one over the Kenai River, and replace an existing bridge over the Kenai River. Additionally, the route would reconstruct 8 miles of the existing highway.

The G South Alternative provides the best balance between meeting the project needs and minimizing impacts to the human and natural environment. The routing avoids impacts to the Resurrection Pass Trail, the Juneau Falls Recreation Area and important cultural properties, and avoids using designated wilderness land within the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge. The alternative skirts the Cooper Landing community to reduce community impacts associated with traffic, noise and property acquisition.

The Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (SEIS) and Draft Section 4(f) Evaluation were distributed for public review in April and May 2015. The identification of the preferred alternative considered the hundreds of comments received. A Final EIS and Record of Decision are anticipated in 2016. The decision on which alternative will be selected is not final until the Record of Decision. Following completion of the federal environmental process, the project will enter the design phase, and construction could begin in 2018.

The purpose of the Sterling Highway MP 45-60 Project is to bring the highway up to current standards for a rural principal arterial to efficiently and safely serve through-traffic, local community traffic and traffic bound for recreation destinations in the area, both now and in the future. In achieving this transportation purpose, DOT&PF and FHWA recognize the importance of protecting the Kenai River corridor. Additional project information may be found online at sterlinghighway.net.

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities oversees 249 airports, 11 ferries serving 35 communities, 5,619 miles of highway and 720 public facilities throughout the state of Alaska. The mission of the department is to “**Keep Alaska Moving** through service and infrastructure.”

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