

4805 Bitterroot Drive
Missoula, MT 59804
July 18, 2012

Montana Department of Transportation
Missoula District
2100 West Broadway
Missoula, MT 59807

Missoula County Commissioners
200 West Broadway
Missoula, MT 59802

Re: Maclay Bridge Study Comments

Dear Commissioners:

I attended the recent public meeting regarding the Maclay Bridge Study held at Target Range School. I wanted to take this opportunity to add my comments regarding the study and the conduct of the meeting.

I have received and reviewed a copy of the comments submitted by Michael Burnside and fully endorse those comments; however, my prospective of the bridge is somewhat different since I live on the west side of Maclay Bridge.

I do not believe that the materials presented at the public meeting adequately identify the inadequate status of emergency response to the west side of the bridge. As you know historically emergency vehicles responded to the area west of Maclay Bridge by crossing the bridge. As a result of the reduction in the load limit on the bridge in 2011 to 11 tons, emergency vehicles were prohibited from using Maclay Bridge for a period of time.

After a rather long process an agreement was entered into between the county and the Missoula Rural Fire District which allowed some (but not all) of the Rural Fire District's equipment to cross Maclay Bridge, so long as the vehicles straddled the center line of the bridge and traveled at no more than five (5) miles per hour. That is the current situation.

While the current situation allowing emergency response over Maclay Bridge is better than not being able to use the bridge at all, it is still inadequate. This restriction on emergency response to the west side of Maclay Bridge means that those of use who live west of Maclay Bridge receive a lower level of emergency response service than those on the east side of the bridge - not

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because travel times are longer, but because the infrastructure is inadequate for emergency vehicles. These restrictions put lives and property west of Maclay Bridge at risk. This issue was not addressed at all at the public meeting or in the materials presented at the public meeting. Failure to address the adequacy of emergency response services to the west side of Maclay Bridge is a critical failure of the study.

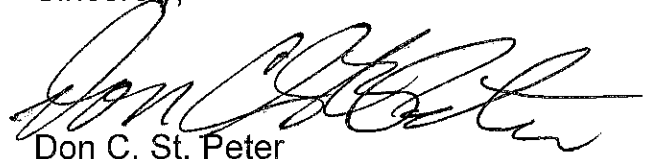
Now I have learned that Maclay Bridge is considered "scour critical." I understand this to mean that the bridge is at risk of failure due to scour and undercutting. I learned this from the efforts of Michael Burnside, not from the study materials presented at the public meeting. Again, failure to identify this issue is a critical failure of the study.

A failure of Maclay Bridge due to scour and undercutting puts county residents west of Maclay Bridge at risk of a further degradation of emergency response services, which would continue for years, if not decades. It is imperative that the Commissioners plan for a new bridge that will ensure adequate emergency response service to the west side of Maclay Bridge for decades into the future without the deficiencies noted above.

I want to address the conduct of the public meeting at Target Range School. At the meeting, a member of the Maclay Bridge Alliance was given the opportunity to make a public statement while no alternative viewpoint was allowed to be presented. This one-sided treatment was grossly unfair to those of us who believe that Maclay Bridge should be replaced. It also allowed Dr. Martin to present factually incorrect information without rebuttal and engage in blatant fear mongering.

I demand that at the next public meeting those with views opposing Dr. Martin be given the opportunity to rebut his statements - without rebuttal from Dr. Martin or those of his view.

Sincerely,



Don C. St. Peter