

SENATOR JERRY WARD  
ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

Sponsor Statement  
SB 44 and SB 45

**Establishment of an Alaska Toll  
Bridge and Causeway Authority  
and appropriation for the Design of Knik Arm Crossing**

The proposed legislation would appropriate \$1 million in state general funds to form the authority, and to design a crossing that will span Cook Inlet from the Port of Anchorage to Point McKenzie. Eighty percent of the construction costs will be covered by federal funds. The Causeway Authority will issue transportation bonds for up to 20% of the costs, and collect tolls to re-pay the bonds.

The objectives and benefits of a causeway between the Municipality of Anchorage on the southeast side of the Arm and the Matanuska-Susitna (Mat-Su) Borough on the northwest are as follows:

- To bring additional developable land within proximity of Anchorage to provide for long-term growth.
- To enhance port and industrial development opportunities on vacant lands in the Mat-Su Borough.
- To improve the efficiency of motor vehicle operations between outlying communities and Anchorage.
- To improve access between Mat-Su Borough natural resources and the Anchorage Market.

I introduced the same legislation during the 13<sup>th</sup> legislature. Now with Congressman Young's leadership we can finally cross the Knik Arm. When Congressman Don Young was elected to chair the U.S. House Transportation Committee, he announced two priorities that he would be working on. One was providing federal funds to help build the Knik Arm Crossing. The Alaska Toll Bridge and Causeway Authority created in this proposed bill has been intended for decades in various legislation and would oversee the use of federal funds appropriated for this project.