

**FUTURE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF THE
GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD IN GLACIER NA-
TIONAL PARK**

FIELD HEARING

BEFORE THE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC
LANDS
OF THE

COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

ONE HUNDRED FIFTH CONGRESS

SECOND SESSION

SEPTEMBER 21, 1998, KALISPELL, MONTANA

Serial No. 105-115

Printed for the use of the Committee on Resources



Available via the World Wide Web: <http://www.access.gpo.gov/congress/house>
or
Committee address: <http://www.house.gov/resources>

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

51-797 CC

WASHINGTON : 1998

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FUTURE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF THE GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD IN GLACIER NA- TIONAL PARK

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1998

HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, SUBCOMMITTEE ON NA-
TIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS, COMMITTEE ON RE-
SOURCES, *Kalispell, Montana.*

The Subcommittee met, pursuant to notice, at 10:05 a.m. at Cavanaugh's at Kalispell Center, Ballroom A, 20 North Main, Kalispell, Montana, Hon. Rick Hill, presiding.

Mr. HILL. [presiding] The Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands will come to order.

The Subcommittee is meeting today to hear testimony on rehabilitating the historic Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier Park.

I do have an opening statement that I want to add to the record. First, I want to thank all the witnesses for taking their valuable time to add to the important discussion, and I want to thank all of you who are here attending today's hearing. Your interest in helping the National Park Service and our Subcommittee deliberate on rebuilding this road is very important to all of us, and I've asked for this hearing due to my concern and the concern that has been expressed by many of my constituents over the possible impacts that the rebuilding effort may have on the Park, on nearby communities and on Montana's tourism industry.

Chairman Hanson was gracious enough to allow us to hold this hearing because of the road's significance, not only to the local communities and to Montana, because of its importance to the whole of the National Park System, and he has told me personally that he believes that this hearing will be very valuable as the Subcommittee examines this effort and similar projects around the country.

He and other Members of the Subcommittee could not be here today. However, that doesn't mean they don't care about this issue. They will continue to pay close attention to the hearing record and the progress that we make in this matter today. I would point out to you that we had two Committee Members who were unable to attend the hearing simply because of accommodations for the airlines. They were unable to get air passage into Kalispell because of the strike and then the impacts associated with that.

This is important for many reasons, this hearing. We all want to protect this historic road, and I think everybody here agrees that that is an important role for the Congress and for the Park Service. We also want to enhance access by visitors, and we want to also enhance visitor enjoyment of the Park. We also want to make sure that the local economy will not be unfairly impacted by and during

the reconstruction effort, and for that reason, my goals in this hearing are really two-fold: One, I want to have a discussion of the mitigating—how we can mitigate the economic impacts to the local communities as much as possible by finding the right alternative to the reconstruction days following this hearing. We also are going to have an open mike period for some period following the hearing. That may be restricted by time to a half hour or an hour, and we will allow people to enter public comment. I would ask those that do to limit their comments to 2 minutes and to also confine their comments to the road as opposed to any of the other issues associated with the Management Plan.

You may also submit your thoughts to my offices here in Montana or in Washington, or you can submit them to the Honorable Jim Hanson, Chairman of the Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands, at H1-814 O'Neill House Office Building, Washington, DC, 20515, and that will be available for you. You don't have to write that down. You can also see any member of my staff that is here if you have trouble getting any or all of that information or submitting that information. They will be here to help the public during and after this hearing.

With that, again, I want to thank everybody for their interest. I look forward to a productive discussion and hearing where we can work together to find some commonsense solutions, and with that I would like to call our first witnesses to the table.

Our first panel of witnesses is Dave Mihalic, superintendent of Glacier Park, and Carol Jacoby, an engineer with the Western Federal Lands Highway Division of the Federal Highway Administration.

If you would both stand and raise your right hands, it is the general process, as you know, with the rules of the 105th Congress, that all witnesses appearing before Congressional hearings are sworn under oath, and we will ask all witnesses to do that.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. HILL. Thank you.

I would remind the witnesses that under the Committee rules they should be limiting their oral statements to 5 minutes. If they have a longer statement than that, it will appear in the record.

I now recognize Mr. Mihalic.

STATEMENT OF DAVID MIHALIC, SUPERINTENDENT, GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Mr. MIHALIC. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I'd also like to introduce Ms. Mary Riddle, who is our General Management Plan coordinator, who is sitting next to me.

Mr. Chairman, we applaud your interest in seeking ways to maintain the values preserved by—

Mr. HILL. You need to turn your mike on.

Mr. MIHALIC. I'm sorry. I should say, Mr. Chairman, that my statement has been submitted to the Committee for the record, and I'll summarize it here.

Mr. Chairman, we applaud your interest in seeking ways to maintain the values preserved by our national parks, which are so important to all Americans, and also critical to local communities near the parks. A General Management Plan guides the administration of each unit of the National Park System.

Glacier's last master plan was completed in 1977. Our first public scoping meetings were held in the spring of 1995. Since then, we have had a number of opportunities to listen to the public, those both near and far, so that we can incorporate their comments into our planning. One of the most controversial issues is how to rehabilitate the world famous Going-to-the-Sun Road.

This national landmark has been rightly recognized as perhaps the most scenic road in North America. The deterioration of the Sun Road was recognized by the Service over a decade ago. With the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act, funds were made available to the National Park Service for park road construction across the nation. Glacier and the needs of the Sun Road competed with other national park needs across the country.

The only work scheduled in the next few years is on some of the most critical repair needs on the retaining walls in the alpine section of the Sun Road and a slumping section of the Many Glacier Road. These sites are sections of the road where it is easier to maintain visitor traffic during construction even though delays still result. There is no worse than a half mile of road in the Logan Pass area. For those who remember, it was a nightmare, both for the contractor and the public. Some of the delays seemed interminable. We tried many things and learned a tremendous amount from that experience. For example, we tried night work. We tried lane closures, scheduling major work in the fall, all those steps that quickly come to mind. Mostly, we learned that working on this high, narrow, carved-from-a-cliff national landmark cannot be done without conflicts and impacts when the construction season and the visitor season are almost one and the same.

As a result, the Service and the Federal Highway Administration put our most experienced engineers and transportation planners to work on how best to continue the road work and minimize the impact to visitors. We're using the General Management Plan process to seek public input.

We quickly learned three things: First, doing the work conventionally with the funding we would normally expect from the Park Roads and Parkways Program would take decades to complete; second, being able to maintain traffic flow, which really means ensuring visitors to Glacier would be able to continue to traverse the Park, is a tremendous complicating factor; finally, the costs of the different alternatives vary radically, from approximately \$70 million to \$210 million.

We've been very concerned since the beginning about the potential for tremendous economic impact. We know that the road work might impact the whole state, especially as Montana prepares for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. We also know that there are different economic interests at stake, whether one is located east of the Divide or in the Flathead, in a retail or service industry or gateway community visiting Glacier.

We arranged for studies of the economic impacts on local businesses and the broader travel industry. Those studies indicated that the economic pain only gets worse the longer the work drags on. Since then, the University of Montana has conducted independent studies arriving at similar conclusions.

Mr. Chairman, I wish I could sit before you today and tell you that we have a plan or the money to carry it out to rebuild the road without disrupting anything, but I cannot. We do not have the fiscal resources that come anywhere near matching the road needs of our parks, and for every tax dollar spent in Glacier, there are \$3 for other national parks that go unmet.

We have proposed what we believe is the best solution given the knowledge we have today. Believe me. If there's a better solution, I will be the first to embrace it. We also do not want to see the road closed from the public any more than necessary, nor do we want to see a catastrophic road failure.

I also pledge to you that we see this as an opportunity to work closely with the surrounding communities and the State of Montana. During the time we are developing detail design, we would be happy to work with the communities and the state to mitigate as much as possible the effects on local and State economies during the period that the road is under construction. In fact, I hope we can use the challenge we all face with the road construction to forge the most successful cooperation yet among the Park, the State and the affected communities to better serve our visitors.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your leadership in bringing these issues to the forefront. The Sun Road is perhaps the most spectacular roadway in the National Park System. Our agency's mission is to preserve these treasures for future generations and also use them for the present. I assure you that is our goal.

That concludes my formal remarks, Mr. Chairman, and I'd be happy to respond to any questions you may have.

Mr. HILL. Thank you Mr. Mihalic.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Mihalic may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Ms. Jacoby.

STATEMENT OF CAROL H. JACOBY, DIVISION ENGINEER, WESTERN FEDERAL LANDS HIGHWAY DIVISION, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION to improve the condition of Going-to-the-Sun Road. The Federal Highway Administration has been assisting the Park Service in assessing the roadway and transportation needs and how to enact reconstruction. This assistance is being provided in accordance with the 1983 Interagency Agreement between the National Park Service and Federal Highway Administration.

The current assistance Federal Highway is providing began in 1984 with a study of the roads in Glacier National Park and, particularly, Going-to-the-Sun Road. Since then, we've been updating the findings of the 1984 study, and we've been continuing our efforts with the Park to look at these roads.

Improvements have been initiated on the Park road. The work within Glacier National Park is challenging due to the difficult terrain, the importance of preserving Park values and the impact of how and when reconstruction projects occur and the need to accommodate the traveling public. In summary, the Federal Highway Administration is committed to assisting the Park Service to develop and refine alternatives in the General Management Plan to expedite rehabilitating Going-to-the-Sun Road and, simultaneously, minimize impacts on the traveling public visiting the Park and the adjacent edge communities.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments, and we're available to answer detailed questions.

[The prepared statement of Ms. Jacoby may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much.

Thank you both for your testimony. Let me ask a few questions.

Let me start with one—It's a bit indirectly related to the whole reconstruction effort, but one of the issues I've heard from a number of constituents about is the issue of the width of the road. There's some areas where we're doing reconstruction right now where we're actually narrowing the road from what it is now. I think it's what is referred to as Moose Country. Can you address that matter, why we're narrowing the road, Mr. Mihalic, and what the responsibilities of the Park are in that area?

Mr. MIHALIC. Well, I think that we're trying to make the road retain its historic character. The roadway width is 22 feet. It's that width substantially all the way up through the Lake McDonald section and also on the east side. There is a section in Moose Country, probably less than half a mile, that was flooded in the 1964 flood and repaired at that time, and at that time it was made 26 feet wide. In order to make that section back along the—to the width of the rest of the roadway, we're reducing it from 26 feet to 22 feet.

Most of the road that the public drives, the vast majority of the road that the public drives, is 22 feet or less.

I think that—I'm not sure what the concern is in this one particular section of coming down from 26 to 22 feet, unless there's some engineering concern that I'm not aware of.

Mr. HILL. I think the concern is, I think, two-fold. One is the issue of safety. Are we adequately considering the concerns of safety when we narrow the road or if we confine it to its historic width? In your testimony I think you pointed out that we built this road with horse drawn equipment, and it was built for a different age. Are we adequately considering the impact on the safety of the traveling public?

Mr. MIHALIC. I would believe we are, and, certainly, Ms. Jacoby could answer from an engineering prospective, from a safety engineering perspective.

The biggest concern we have with respect to safety on the road is really bicyclists on the road. Probably most people who have driven that road know that the area that's of most concern is really on the high alpine section. We've had hardly any bicycle accidents on those portions of the road that are 22 feet wide, and this one particular section is fairly straight. If anything, a wider road would encourage greater speeds.

I think we're just going on the basis of our experience.

Mr. HILL. One of the concerns there, it seems, Dave, is tning that part of the road an additional two to two and a half feet. I don't know if there's—if it's a strict standard through every one, but we are adding additional pavement and roadway width in those areas where it's a concern.

Mr. HILL. In the corners?

Mr. MIHALIC. So I think it's not so much that we're sticking to a standard and we're not considering anything else. I think we're trying to work with our engineers to try to find out how to maintain the road as a historic road, which the public has told us they want to see, and yet be able to take care of these safety concerns.

Mr. HILL. But it is your interpretation that your responsibility to maintain it as an historic road does obligate you to maintain the roadway width at 22 feet? I mean, that's the Park's conclusion?

Mr. MIHALIC. I think what we've found is that 22 feet keeps the road a gentle, curving, pleasurable, low-speed visitor experience and that any concern about safety with bicyclists, collisions or anything else is just really not there. Obviously, we want to—The road was probably even narrower. It was a gravel road when it was constructed for historic purposes.

We're not making a decision and saying, History is dictating this. I think what we're saying is that, This is the best roadway width in order to maintain lower speeds, maintain a safe roadway for

bicyclists and the public, and so far, at least, in the 10 years of experience we have with that width on both sides of the Park, we haven't seen any increase in terms of problems with respect to accidents or accidents with bicyclists.

Mr. HILL. I have some photographs that a constituent has offered suggesting that you're not paving in the corners sufficiently. I'm not going to dwell on that, but what I would do is offer these photographs to you and ask you if you would respond just for the record with regard to the specifics that are here.

Mr. MIHALIC. Certainly.

Mr. HILL. And we can leave that behind.

[The information referred to may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. One of the other issues, though, that has been raised is the suggestion that the reason that the road in that area was wider was to accommodate people to stop and view moose and other wildlife and that, as part of the Management Plan with respect to the road, the Management Plan actually calls for more pullout areas and more areas for people who are touring the Park to be able to stop and observe wildlife or observe the scenery, and the concern that's been expressed to me is that, what is occurring in the area that we're doing reconstruction on right now is somewhat inconsistent with what we're suggesting is going to happen in the rest of the road reconstruction. Could you address that? I just want to get this behind us.

Mr. MIHALIC. Mr. Chairman, I'm not quite sure exactly of the details. In the Moose Country area, we had a huge, giant pullout that people parked in every which way they could, with continuing to have a pullout there that we're going to try to maintain with a little bit more direction, and it's being redesigned. It, I believe, is made a little bit smaller, but I think we're going to have a new base and extended pavement in that area.

I think that without trying to prejudge our General Management Plan and without trying to say that, This is the direction we're going to go, what we are doing in that Moose Country area will be very compatible with the direction of the Management Plan, the alternative that you just referred to.

Mr. HILL. How do you respond to those that say that the road was actually built wider to accommodate that and, by narrowing the road now, we're reducing the accommodation for people to stop and observe?

Mr. MIHALIC. I just don't agree with that. The roadway wasn't built to have cars parked along the edge of the road. The roadway in that area that's being reduced from 26 to 22 feet was much wider than any other part of the 52 miles of road, and our engineers—From an engineering standpoint, maybe Ms. Jacoby could add, but our planners and engineers determined we didn't need to have it that wide in that area. We're going to maintain visitor access. We're going to maintain parking. I think it's consistent with the proposals in the Management Plan.

Mr. HILL. The Management Plan does, as I characterized it, call for actually more pullouts to accommodate that in more areas, doesn't it?

Mr. MIHALIC. Yes, it does.

Mr. HILL. And so I just want to make sure that those who might be concluding from what's occurring in that section that they shouldn't be drawing a conclusion that that means that we're not going to have more pullouts or accommodate—

Mr. MIHALIC. In fact, in this particular section, the area that was there before will be the same size, but it will have some post and railing around it to better define the pullout itself, and we're putting in one extra pullout that was scheduled to be removed based on some of the comments that we had during our General Management Plan. I think we're trying to be very responsive to people who have opinions on highway engineering, but we've engaged the Federal Highway Association for actual engineering opinions.

Mr. HILL. And, Ms. Jacoby, do you want to comment about that, about the width of the road and the safety issues there and turns and that?

Ms. JACOBY. Just a general statement is that, one of the frequent issues that we deal with on park roads is the issue of informal parking, and that does provide safety and operational problems. So we try to work with the Park Service to actually define where the parking will be and to accommodate the parking needs, but to do it in a defined area and to control the access to and from those parking areas, because that's a frequent point of safety interaction problems.

Mr. HILL. What about the width of the road? When you're designing roads today, what's the standard width that you design roads for today?

Ms. JACOBY. There's no one answer to that. It depends on the amount of traffic you have on the road, the terrain you're dealing with, and I would say that where we are for the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier is, we're trying to mesh what the current vehicle uses are with the historic character of the road and what we could feasibly enact. We don't have the opportunity to do a lot of road widening in here because of the nature of the road.

Mr. HILL. I understand. Particularly in the alpine region.

Ms. JACOBY. Right.

Mr. HILL. There's no doubt about that.

Going back to the issue of safety, I want to specifically address the issue of the safety. Is there some equation that the Highway Administration has with regard to road widths and gradients and with regard to speed and those matters? I mean, are there some formulas that are available for that?

Ms. JACOBY. The highway industry as a whole has some identified standards. The National Park Service has looked—And that industry, as a whole that I'm referring to, is the Association of the State Highway Transportation Officials. They've got standards defined, and we use those as guidance materials. The National Park Service in 1984 looked at those materials and published their own road standards that matched those pretty much line for line, but it brings in some of the Park road esthetics and that. So we used those two documents to come up with what we think we need to do.

We also—We do have defined processes to identify how much curve widening we should be using in those curves.

Mr. HILL. Is that information available in some sort of a condensed manner that we could make available to the public so that we can—so that folks who have written to me and others who have raised this issue would have that available to them?

Ms. JACOBY. We could provide references for the record and probably provide a narrative of how we go through that process and submit that to the record.

Mr. HILL. The key point here is, obviously, you can mitigate for narrowness by speed and other issues; right, and how you deal with corners, and if there's some—Either you could provide in separate written report to the Committee or if there's some other material that's generally available, I'd appreciate it if you'd have that. We could make it available to those people that raised that concern.

Ms. JACOBY. We will do that.

Mr. HILL. I'd appreciate that.

[The information referred to may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Mr. Mihalic, your obligation here—You're not in the highway business, are you? The Park Service isn't in the business of designing highways and engineering highways? It's your responsibility to look to the Federal Highway Administration to consult with this?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct, Mr. Chairman. The National Park Service and—I think in terms of good government and efficiency, there's no reason to duplicate those services in each agency, so we look to the Federal Highway Administration for the expertise.

Mr. HILL. And they do the design work for the design of the highway and the specifications and actually administer—Do they actually administer those contracts?

Mr. MIHALIC. They do, but, obviously, they work with our designers and our transportation planners. Most of our people that work with them are landscape architects as opposed to highway engineers. One of the reasons for that is because the Park road experience for visitors is usually a means to some further recreational or visitor experience. It's not normally merely a means for a car to get from Point A to Point B, and it becomes the trip—

Mr. HILL. In other words, a straight and level highway is not necessarily the objective here?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct. So that's why one of the biggest things that the National Park Service, I think, has learned in all the national parks and working with all the roads—and as a ranger, I worked a lot of accidents—is that the biggest thing that you can do to prevent accidents is to keep the speed down, and when—Many of the visitors in national parks do not want to go fast. They want to go slow. It helps if you provide the vehicle, in a sense, in terms of the roadway, by having curves, by having not the standard highway road widths, by having what we call park road standards.

And those are the standards Ms. Jacoby refers to, and most of those road standards do focus on narrow width, curve linear alignment and trying to keep down speed as one of the principal issues of trying to maintain a safe highway environment for folks in a national park.

Mr. HILL. What I was leading up to is, some have suggested that, because of the unique nature of this road and the complexities associated with its reconstruction, it might be valuable to go outside the Federal Highway Administration to seek advice and input in how the road might be designed or how the work ought to be staged.

I mean, in this instance we're not redesigning the road in the sense we're not going to relocate the road. We're talking about reconstructing it, and I'd make the case that this isn't anywhere near the typical highway. This really is retaining wall reconstruction more than it is roadbed reconstruction; right?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct. There is a lot of roadbed reconstruction in it because of the way the road was constructed with those horse drawn scrapers and steam shovels way back when.

Mr. HILL. So you do envision removing significant portions of the roadbed itself or relaying the roadbed?

Mr. MIHALIC. I think we have found, in a number of areas, that part of the problems that we see on the surface or with the retaining walls is with respect to the base, the roadbed itself in some areas. I think we're finding that—We had people just last week who found one new, horrendous example, and it is some, what, 15 or 20 feet below the surface of the road.

Mr. HILL. Some kind of void or something?

Ms. JACOBY. Yeah.

Mr. HILL. Ms. Jacoby, how about that? Does the Federal Western Highway Administration have experience with something that you could characterize as similar to this road and this kind of an environment with this kind of challenge?

Ms. JACOBY. Definitely. We just completed a project or we're in the process of completing a project this week in Mt. Rainier National Park in the state of Washington where the road construction techniques are very similar to what we're talking about for Going-for-the-Sun Road.

Mr. HILL. How large of a section of road was that?

Ms. JACOBY. That was only eight-tenths of a mile, but it's only one piece of another alpine section of road.

Mr. HILL. How long did it take it to be constructed?

Ms. JACOBY. For eight-tenths of a mile, we've done it in one season. We've not completed the masonry work, and we've not placed the final pavement surface, but we've gone in and stabilized the walls, put in parapet walls without the final masonry finish and trued up the roadway for its use until we—

Mr. HILL. And was that road closed during that reconstruction?

Ms. JACOBY. It was closed Monday through Thursday at five o'clock, and then the public had access to it Thursday evening, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. That was the traffic management plan we worked out with the Park Service there and the local businesses, but if I could elaborate on some other point.

What has happened to date is that, our efforts with the Park Service—we've actually gone out and talked to Canadian highway officials and other State officials in the continental U.S. and Alaska that deal with cold weather construction techniques, so while it's the Federal Highway Administration that's been providing the engineering input to the Park Service at this point, we have gone

through and done literature searches and talked with our partners in the industry to see if there's something new that we could be incorporating in this road.

Mr. HILL. When you made reference in your testimony to the experience, I think, in 1995 with the reconstruction effort, what were the problems that developed in that project in your mind?

Ms. JACOBY. I'm personally going to have to either defer to a staff member from my office, because I did not work in that office in 1995—I just know it didn't work or if—or if Dave wants to talk—

Mr. HILL. Sure.

Mr. MIHALIC. I'll be happy to kind of give you a general overview. The biggest problems that I think occurred were the fact that we tried night work, and part of the problem with night work is that, to maintain traffic every day as opposed to several days a week and then work on it several days a week, as Ms. Jacoby just related with respect to Mt. Rainier, is a fact that a portion of the time is getting back to the point you were the night before. So you spend a couple of hours or at least some time getting to the point where you can make progress, further progress, and then before the road opens the next morning, you have to put the road back so that the public can then, therefore, use it. That's one of the issues, together with the fact that it's cold. It's rainy. It could be dark. You're having to use lights to—you know, artificial lighting and so on in terms of a safety issue, but just the fact that you're expending some of your time just getting to a point where you can make progress.

The biggest thing during the day, I think, from the public's point of view, was that we allowed the contractor, I believe, 25-minute closures, and during that time, the traffic backed up so far that it would take 2 or 3 hours to get the traffic—because we could only move one lane at a time, to get all the traffic moving to a point where they could have another 25-minute closure. The folks behind us might know differently, but I've been told that on some days things were so bad that they'd have one period of closure in the morning, and traffic would be disrupted for the rest of the day, and they would, literally, have to just do things that they could do around the fact that traffic was moving until they could get a second closure either late in the day and, on some days, maybe not even get a second closure.

That was part of the problem that ran that job, which originally was scheduled to be 1 year and finishing up the second year, to end up being a 2-year job, and it finished up the third year.

Mr. HILL. How large of a section of road was that?

Mr. MIHALIC. It was less than a half a mile. It was right at Oberland Bend, from Logan Pass around the corner, and it was all in just one short section.

Mr. HILL. I guess what I'm leading up to—I'm not sure there's an answer to this, but what have we learned from that? It didn't work out like you thought it was going to.

Mr. MIHALIC. The biggest thing that we learned at that time was that—And I'm told it was seven-tenths of a mile. It looked like a half a mile to me.

Mr. HILL. It was on a curve.

Mr. MIHALIC. The biggest thing I think we learned is that we had in our program—And I can't remember which year it was to begin. We had some three miles along the Rimrock section, which, for the public that knows the road, is the high alpine section just immediately preceding Logan Pass on the west side—But we had a three-mile section of road that, working with Federal Highway engineers, our folks had thought we could do in 2 years, and they came back after that, and they said, Well, we think now if we cut it in half we could do it in 7 years.

That was about the time that we started asking, Well, just how long will it take us to do it, given the fact that the way we do road construction is not in a comprehensive manner, but it's strictly driven by the dollars that we get out of the total pot of park roadway money that's allocated to Glacier? We take the money we get. We find a project to fit it.

Mr. HILL. In fact, I've made note to make that point, and my understanding is that, right now, the funding that you get comes from an allocation that's made to the Park Service, and it's allocated to this Park and Yellowstone and all the other parks, and you, I would presume, have some sort of a queuing system that you go into for those dollars, and that's how it's handled; right?

Mr. MIHALIC. It's all on a competition basis where we compete with roads within our region, which includes Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, Grand Teton, Rocky Mountain National Park, and then we further compete with roadway needs across the nation.

Mr. HILL. But what we're proposing here is to actually have Congress appropriate funds independent of that park allocation or to direct the Park Service to use its allocation to this purpose. That's part of what the Management Plan now contemplates, as opposed to how it's now handled, at least the preferred alternative.

Mr. MIHALIC. The Management Plan would not suggest your first alternative, certainly. That would be way beyond their bounds, but what the Management Plan is suggesting is that, by continuing to go about it the way we have been, driven by the dollar allocation that we get—and it's a very small allocation—

Mr. HILL. Which is, what, \$3 million a year?

Mr. MIHALIC. It's a couple of million dollars a year. It's, like, \$3 to \$4 million every other year, so it ends up being about a couple million dollars a year. That to continue to try to do the comprehensive project in that manner literally will take decades. I say "Decades" because I've been told 30 years, 40 years or 50 years.

Mr. HILL. In the recent highway bill, do you recall how much was allocated to parks, to all the parks?

Mr. MIHALIC. It was about \$182 million, I believe, in appropriation, but there's \$20 million that's set aside for another project. I believe the Park Service ends up with about \$161—

Mr. HILL. For this year?

Mr. MIHALIC. No. Each year. That's correct.

Mr. HILL. Each year. So in other words, there's \$150 or \$160 million dollars per year for the next 5 years from now—

Mr. MIHALIC. About \$165 million a year.

Mr. HILL. [continuing] for all the parks and all the roads and—

Mr. MIHALIC. We're competing with 370 national park areas.

Mr. HILL. The Management Plan contemplates that this project will be handled, at least to some extent, independent of that?

Mr. MIHALIC. What it suggests is that, to be fiscally responsible, we ought to do it in some sort of broader, comprehensive manner, rather than look at road construction up on that road, which is of tremendous impact on public use, every year for the next 30, 40 or 50 years.

Mr. HILL. Ms. Jacoby, has the Federal Highway Administration solicited any input from outside parties, engineering groups, construction, design/build organizations, et cetera, to look at this project in terms of how you're looking at—how we might handle the scheduling issue and the staging problems that we experienced in 1995?

Ms. JACOBY. At this point, other than talking with other industry officials that I referenced earlier, no, we have not. The efforts we have done to date have been really conceptual in format to identify techniques that could be used, and some of that information we had internally. Some of that information we learned through talking with other State and Canadian highway officials.

We are not in design at this point. We've been doing the conceptual planning with the Park Service, and we've been doing data gathering as far as surveying or field data collection, but we've been waiting—

Mr. HILL. But you haven't gone outside the Highway Administration?

Ms. JACOBY. No.

Mr. HILL. Do you think it's a good idea that you did?

Ms. JACOBY. At this point I don't know what we would have asked. We're not into design. We've got no funding for design. We're waiting for the Park Service to select a preferred alternative as a result of this Management Plan and to collectively have the Park Service and Federal Highway Administration go into the final design of this project.

Mr. HILL. But, you know, there's a bit of a chicken and egg thing here. If you're going to wait for the conclusion of the Management Plan before you contemplate the issues of staging and scheduling—I mean, the choices that are made in this Management Plan assume that those decisions have been made. I mean, they're built into the decision, if you're going to do it 5 years or you're going to do it 15 years.

So the question that I'm asking is, do you think that there would be some value in seeking some outside input at this point in looking at this issue and this set of issues at this stage of the game? We're going to be making some decisions that are going to be, theoretically, irreversible here if the Management Plan is adopted and Congress supports it.

Ms. JACOBY. What's in the Management Plan right now is based on the concepts we know that are available in the industry, and the timeframes and the dollars that are outlined in there provide some flexibility on how they would be implemented.

Mr. HILL. When you say, Concepts in the industry—

Ms. JACOBY. As far as whether you would go in and have precast roadside barriers versus building that barrier onsite, whether you can—when you have to do concrete work in the cold weather, what

you can do to still get good concrete but knowing that you're trying to extend your construction season on the alpine section. We've talked to the industry on what they've done, if they did pave in less than desirable weather conditions.

Mr. HILL. When you're talking about talking to the industry, then you have consulted with engineering firms and construction companies outside the Highway Administration, or has that consultation been within the—

Ms. JACOBY. The consultation has been with the State Departments of Transportation as far as what they're implementing and with the Canadian Department of Transportation or whatever their structure is in Canada.

Mr. HILL. Let me ask, again, the question. Do you think there would be some value in seeking some input from outside organizations, engineering firms, construction companies that have dealt with some of these issues in other ways? Do you think there's some value in that?

Ms. JACOBY. I think the value comes when we actually start putting the pieces together and get more detailed about talking staging and manpower.

Mr. HILL. So the answer is, Yes, or, No?

Ms. JACOBY. The answer is, Yes, there's value in doing it. It's being smart about when you do it.

Mr. HILL. There's some who think that we could actually bring some creative ideas to the table now if we went outside the environment that we're in now and, I mean, given the fact that those are—we're going to be making some of those decisions before we actually get the design in terms of how the Management Plan is adopted—

Ms. JACOBY. Right.

Mr. HILL. [continuing] that this would be a good time perhaps to do that. Do you need direction from Congress to do that, or would it be helpful if Congress gave that direction?

Ms. JACOBY. I don't need that direction, sir. I guess what I'm looking at is that, I see the alternatives to the Management Plan where we lay out a scheme on how we're going to manage traffic, and they really don't deal with the engineering solutions to the issues. The alternatives in there—

Mr. HILL. I mean, part of the engineering issue here is how the work is staged and scheduled and laid out, whether you close the road or don't, how you accommodate use of the Park. That's part of this decision, and it will be part of the design; right? I mean, it will be part of—I mean, how you—what sequence you allow—let contracts, if you do it in multiple contracts, how you stage restoring supplies, where you get gravel, where a hot plant—I mean, all those are issues that will be changed, depending upon how you went about staging this work; right? They would all change, depending on how you went about staging this work; right?

Ms. JACOBY. They would all change, depending on how we've staged the work, and we've provided that information to the Park Service in the preparation of the Management Plan. All those items will also change, depending on how the work is actually funded and whether we get the funding when we need it.

Mr. HILL. Going on on this—Dave, one of the questions that has been raised—and I'd ask you to respond to—is that, it appears as though in the Management Plan that there—Obviously, there's a big effort here in terms of allocation of dollars to the reconstruction of the road, and it seems to ignore the need for road maintenance. I mean, if you take 10 years to rebuild this road or 15 years or 6 years, there's going to have to also be some ongoing maintenance of the sections of the road that have already been done; right?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct.

Mr. HILL. Where does that come into this equation? Is that going to be some supplemental funding? Do you think you'll get an allocation from the Park Service in addition to this project? Will you use FEMA? You have funds now that you're getting from increased fees. Are you anticipating allocating some of those to that effort?

Mr. MIHALIC. Obviously, it would be wonderful, as happened with the Beartooth, if we got road construction funding that we also got maintenance funding along with it. Maintenance of park roads comes out of our operation of the National Park Service allocation, and that allocation is part of the normal budget process with the Department of Interior and the Office of Management and Budget and—

Mr. HILL. I mean, you're hopeful, is where we are. There's one other thing I want to go on, and then, just so the people understand, you're going to come back later, after we hear from the members of the public, and we can carry on this conversation some more, because—Hopefully, we'll have some valuable input.

One of the questions that I have goes to the economic impacts. Dave, you and I have talked some about that. I don't know than we necessarily agree about that, but let me just ask you a couple of questions.

One, nowhere in the economic analysis that I have seen is there any analysis of the economic impacts to the Park itself, revenues to the Park, revenues—how that would impact the budget of the Park—

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct.

Mr. HILL. [continuing] and, basically, no analysis of how that would impact the concessions within the Park or the concessionaires within the Park.

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct.

Mr. HILL. Is that by design?

Mr. MIHALIC. I don't believe so, sir. I think, you know, the Management Plan is to provide general guidance. It's to provide a direction. It seemed to me that this issue was such a huge issue that, if we were to just assume that we can reconstruct this road over the next several decades the way we have been doing it and not consider it in a General Management Plan that we would be doing two things. First, we wouldn't be being very honest with the public about what to expect in their national Park over the next 20 years, but, second, that we wouldn't be giving them an opportunity to say if they wanted to do it—have it be done any other way. So we included the Sun Road issue in the Management Plan.

As part of that general management planning process, we looked at what to do with the Sun Road, and we've come a tremendous distance with respect to how the Sun Road should be managed, and

what we're proposing is that the Sun Road not be turned into a tramway, not be turned into a monorail, not be turned into a railway, not be turned into a bike path or a hiking trail, but continue its historic use by the private automobile and general use by the American public as an example of one of the most spectacular roadways in the world.

The real issue is how to get there, and we recognized that there was going to be an economic impact, regardless of the different ways of how to get there, and so we took the funding that we had available for that, and we asked the contractor to tell us the economic impact to the state of Montana in the best way they could in the time that they had to do that.

The Park is not there for the benefit of the concessionaire. The concessionaire works as a contractor for the National Park Service to provide visitor services for us. The National Park does not exist for the economic benefit of the contractor. The fact that there are economic benefits around the Park are wonderful because they—That's stuff that we don't have to provide, and we couldn't really best serve our public without them, and so we do want to minimize any economic impact.

What we tried to do is that—We tried to address everything in a comprehensive manner, and the contractor—The economic impact contractor was asked to include the concessionaires, not in specifics, but in the broader sense, with the economic figures for the state of Montana. The local businesses were the same. We didn't ask for it to be strictly local because we know that if somebody turns right in Miles City and heads up toward Glacier National Park it's going to have an economic impact to communities along the High Line.

So we didn't want to try to limit it in any way, and with what we have—We've got a general overlook, and the specifics may be—As you have said, some of the underpinnings may not be as strong as they could be. If we had an approved project and had approved direction to look at this road construction in some greater comprehensive manner, then we could have—the funding, I would assume, would come with that to do such economic studies to make sure we got the right solution in the end.

Mr. HILL. The concern—I guess what I'm leading up to is that, in your opinion is it the responsibility of the Park Service to mitigate the economic impacts on the Park itself?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's not what Congress has told us our responsibility is, no, sir.

Mr. HILL. OK. What is your responsibility, then? What in your judgment is your responsibility in terms of the Park itself, the Park, the budget—

Mr. MIHALIC. With respect to the economic—

Mr. HILL. Yeah.

Mr. MIHALIC. I think that what we have here is almost a classic tale of Aesop's fable in which we have a goose that's laying golden eggs, and if we want to have those eggs continue to provide economic benefit from the Park, then we need to make sure that that goose is a healthy goose.

Mr. HILL. I understand that.

Mr. MIHALIC. This national park has resources and—that are spectacular in terms of the scenery, has animals that people can see from the road. Just yesterday morning I was able to see a bear on the east side of the Park. That's what the public wants to see, so our responsibility is to ensure that that national park is a healthy national park with basic infrastructure to serve Park visitors. Some of those other visitor needs, rightfully, should be assumed by the private economy outside the Park. They're not an inherited government function, and I would think they wouldn't be our responsibility.

Mr. HILL. That's what I wanted to spend some time talking about, because in the contemplation of this, maybe that's something Congress should look at. What I think I hear you saying is that, as part of the development of the Management Plan—and we're confining, at this point, to the discussion of the road—is that it is your view that the Park Service doesn't have an obligation to conduct this reconstruction in a fashion that would mitigate—I'm talking responsibility now. To mitigate the economic impacts even to the Park itself. Is that what you're saying?

Mr. MIHALIC. No, sir. I'm saying that—I'm saying that our responsibility is set up in more than just one particular area, and on page 49 of our Management Plan overview, we've said that, The National Park Service prefers an alternative that preserves the historic character of the road, completes the repairs before the road fails, minimizes the impact on natural resources, visitors and the local economy and minimizes the costs.

So we think that the impact on the local economy is certainly part of our responsibility, but it's not the first part, nor is it the only part, and I think that what we want to ensure is that we can choose the alternative that best minimizes the impact.

To date two studies have shown that the longer the work drags on the more the economic pain. If there's a better solution that will do a better job that accomplishes all of those other goals and even further minimizes the local economic impact, I'm all for that, but I'm not sure that it's the National Park Service's responsibility to produce a solution that first goes to the greatest effort to minimizing that local economic impact.

Mr. HILL. As a matter of fact, I agree with you about that, but what I'm just trying to get the point to here is that, either it is part of your responsibility or not. I'm not trying to suggest that—

Mr. MIHALIC. I think it is part of our responsibility.

Mr. HILL. You agree this is part of your responsibility—

Mr. MIHALIC. Yes.

Mr. HILL. [continuing] both to the Park and to the communities, the gateway communities, the people that are directly impacted, and you've made the case that people as far as away as Glasgow could be impacted if it diminishes people who would travel across Highway 2 to the Park, and that's accurate. But I think you would agree that the closer you get to the Park the greater the impact is going to be if, in fact, we reduce visitorship to the Park. Do you agree with that?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct. I would agree with that.

Mr. HILL. That's one of the quarrels I have with the economic study is that the economic study didn't do anything to try to iden-

tify the different levels of impact that would occur based upon proximity to the Park, and I want to be careful here that—We're talking about the economic impacts only because that's where I have the largest quarrel with what has taken place at this point, not necessarily because I think it's the most important thing, and I certainly don't think it's the most important thing. I would agree with your assessment, but it is an important thing.

I would just draw the parallel. If we were talking about the impact on endangered species and we were talking about the proximity of a denning area to the road and we were just going say, Generally, this isn't going to impact grizzly bears, even though we're going to put a gravel pit at a denning area, people would say, Well, no. You've got to be more specific about that. Or if we were going to, you know, locate a hot plant in a location where there was an endangered plant species that could endanger that species particularly, people would say, Well, no. We've got to find a way to locate it in another area because we've got to mitigate that impact and, perhaps in that instance, totally mitigate that impact.

I would simply make the argument that in the area of the economy we have some responsibility to do what we can to mitigate that impact, and the more specific you get, the better job you can do. The more general you get, the less likely you're going to have a good outcome. That's one of my quarrels with the economic analysis that's been done so far.

The second is that the economic analysis and the analysis that has been done of the economic analysis are based upon some assumptions that I think are not reliable, and that is that this is substantially based upon a fairly casual survey that was taken of people traveling through the Park, a relatively small sample and, I think, an inappropriate sample and that even the conclusions that were drawn from that sample are inaccurate conclusions, and then they're replicated in the analysis. If those assumptions are wrong—and I think there's reason to believe that they are—then the whole analysis has relatively little value.

That's a concern that I have, Dave. We don't need to beat about that.

Mr. MIHALIC. No, sir. I think it's a very valid concern, and I think it's a very real concern. I don't know whether—With all due respect, Mr. Chairman, I don't know whether the concern is, in fact, correct. In all of the economic or other socioscience studies that I'm familiar with in the National Park Service, the samples that can determine a confidence level do not have to be all encompassing in order to give you a fairly good confidence level.

I think that the study here gives us a good, broad, general direction to go. Does it give us specifics? No, it doesn't, and in that regard you may, in fact, be correct. However, I would think that it's probably more right than it is wrong. In the study itself, it recognized that, while the estimates are for the whole state, the impacts would be disproportionately felt on communities nearer the Park. It just doesn't say how disproportionately it would be felt.

Mr. HILL. Let me just ask you, Dave. If that report said that this road building would have a disproportionate affect on grizzly bears than it would on bald eagles, do you think the community will say, OK. That's all right?

Mr. MIHALIC. No, sir.

Mr. HILL. You would have to define that?

Mr. MIHALIC. Of course you would. I think the biggest thing that we've taken away from this economic impact analysis is this one point, and that is, the longer the work drags on, the greater the economic pain, and so it reinforced our concern that we should seek a better solution than merely dragging out the work over decades.

Our concern also, although it's not expressed in the plan or in the economic analysis, was the fact that the Park road construction every year probably has a detrimental impact to the local economy, and if visitors say, Gosh, it's a great experience, but be ready for road delays, every year, every year, every year, that, too, has an economic impact.

So that's why we really tried to seek a more comprehensive solution. We came up with two ways working with our highway experts, and the general, overall economic analysis for those ways was that quicker was better, and if there's a better way, I will be happy to embrace it.

Mr. HILL. I want to make clear. I'm not disagreeing with you about any of this.

Mr. MIHALIC. I know.

Mr. HILL. What I am saying, though—then we'll move on here—is that you can't mitigate impacts you haven't identified.

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct. I agree with you. You sure can't.

Mr. HILL. My view of the study to date is that it doesn't identify—sufficiently identify those impacts, and so it's almost impossible for you to develop a plan to mitigate it.

Mr. MIHALIC. It doesn't except for the fact that we felt that it went far enough to look at the broad, general direction in terms of a comprehensive plan. You're very correct that it does not go anywhere near to mitigating the impacts if we were to choose one without any further study.

Mr. HILL. Let me just get one last question, and then we're going to let you rest. That is, are you willing to work with the interests that are involved in these local communities to minimize these economic impacts?

Mr. MIHALIC. Absolutely.

Mr. HILL. OK. We'll talk later about how we can get that done, but there's no doubt that you feel a responsibility to do that, and there's a commitment on your part to do that?

Mr. MIHALIC. There's no doubt, Mr. Chairman. I think that it would have been very easy during my tenure as superintendent of Glacier to pass this one by and to let it explode some time down the road. I truly believe that we are much better off to face these things head-on and work together and develop some sort of comprehensive solution before we need to, and that, honest to goodness, is my greatest concern.

Within the first year I was here, a part of that road fell off that mountain, and we even brought—We even brought part of the headlines, and it had a profound impact on me, and that led me to ask Ms. Jacoby's predecessor, Just what plans have we got if that were to occur? Do we even know where it would occur? We didn't know where it would occur. We had no knowledge of the

total condition of the road. Everything was in broad, general parameters.

It seemed to me that, as tough of a pill as this is to even contemplate swallowing, we are far better off trying to work together to come to the best solution for all concerned rather than to just say, Well, we'll turn a blind eye to it, and if it happens, we'll deal with it then. I was just trying to be comprehensive.

I still think that we can work together and get to the end, and it will be better for the local economy, not worse.

Mr. HILL. Let me just say this. I compliment you on that. It's hard to face down the tough issues sometimes, particularly when there's no easy solution, and I agree with you. You and I have had private conversations. I am absolutely committed to do what I can do to help us find a solution and then to fight for what that solution is.

Mr. MIHALIC. I know you are. I'll be there with you.

Mr. HILL. All right. It's going to take a lot of work on a lot of people's parts to do that. The purpose here is to not deter us from finding a solution. The purpose of this meeting to try to get—first of all, to get the community informed about issues and then, also, to get input from the community about, How do we accomplish the best result here? I mean, how do we get to the place that we all know that—We have to rebuild the road, and sooner is better than later. There's no doubt about it. I agree with you about that.

The fact that you're starting this far ahead and—is important, because it allows us to realistically deal with all those issues. I compliment you on that. I appreciate the work that you're doing in that regard.

With that we'll take a brief recess, and we'll come back for some more discussion about that, but I'll ask the other panel to come up. We'll take about a 5-minute recess.

Thank you, Mr. Superintendent.

Thank you, Ms. Jacoby.

[Brief recess.]

Mr. HILL. If we can take our seats and if our second panel would come forward.

Our second panel consists of the Honorable Gary Hall, mayor of Columbia Falls; the Honorable Lowell Meznarich, Glacier County commissioner; Joseph Unterreiner, executive vice-president of the Kalispell Area Chamber of Commerce; Roger Running Crane, vice-chairman of the Blackfeet Tribe; and Will Brooke, owner of the St. Mary KOA Campground.

Before I swear this panel in, I do want to read into the record letters that we have received from Senator Burns and Governor Racicot, and I'll read these into the record so that the people who are in attendance here will have the benefit of this.

From Senator Burns, "I want to congratulate you for your attention to Glacier National Park and Going-to-the-Sun Road. It seems there are few easy answers to the infrastructure needs of Glacier. Whatever course we take with the Going-to-the-Sun Road, whether it be shorter term action, longer term action or even inaction, it will have great implication for the Park and for the families and the communities that depend upon the Park for their survival.

That is why it is extremely vital that we have all the information and opportunities for public input that we can afford.

“Glacier National Park is truly one of our national treasures. We must do everything in our power, in accordance with our stewardship of the Park system, to preserve it and also to help provide for the demands of continued visitation. In light of this, today’s hearing is an important one, and the Committee is to be applauded for your efforts.

“Senator Burns.”

[The prepared statement of Hon. Conrad Burns may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Governor Racicot writes, “We were very pleased to learn that the Subcommittee of the Committee on Resources will be coming to Montana to conduct an oversight hearing on management options regarding the Going-to-the-Sun highway within Glacier National Park. Glacier National Park is valuable to Montanans and Americans in so many ways. It is truly one of Montana’s most unique and special places to visit. In addition, it provides a key component to the economic well-being of many communities in the Flathead and surrounding areas.

“Because we hold such strong feelings about Glacier and because of its extraordinary economic importance, I’m very pleased that you’ve had the foresight to hold an oversight hearing into the future management of Going-to-the-Sun Highway.

“As you are very aware, Glacier National Park has released for public review their draft Environmental Impact Statement and General Management Plan. The complex and difficult issues addressed in this document will be subject to more discussion and review because the Park and future management options for the Park are significantly important both economically and ecologically to our state.

“You have spent much time examining this issue, and I know one of the most complex components of the plan deals with the famous Going-to-the-Sun Highway. While most will recognize that the highway is in need of repair, just how to accomplish the reconstruction is not clear. It is worthy of the review and attention of the Subcommittee hearing that will be—that the Subcommittee’s hearing will provide.

“One very important component in any successful solution will be Congress and the issue of funding. This will be no doubt an expensive multiyear contract, and having Members of the Congressional Subcommittee in Montana to hear from Montanans and Park officials is very important to any successful solution.

“We have informed the National Park Service of our intent to carefully review and analyze the draft Environmental Impact Statement. After our review and analysis is complete, the State of Montana will submit formal comments. As with other efforts of this nature, we will utilize the expertise and various disciplines within State government, which will include this office and the Departments of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, Environmental Quality, Commerce, Natural Resources and Conservation and Transportation. As well, we will be listening to and evaluating comments which come to us from the local and tribal governments and other interested parties.

“Again, thank you for your leadership and for conducting this hearing. We look forward to continuing to work with you and other Members of Congress, the National Park Service and others as we consider future management options for Glacier National Park.

“Sincerely, Marc Racicot, Governor.”

[The prepared statement of Hon. Marc Racicot follows:]

Mr. HILL. If each of you would stand and raise your right hand.

[Witnesses sworn.]

Mr. HILL. What we will do—again, I would ask members of the panels to try to keep their comments to 5 minutes, their public statements. If the statement is longer than that, we will make it a part of the permanent record, and we will start with Mayor Hall.

**STATEMENT OF GARY HALL, MAYOR OF COLUMBIA FALLS,
MONTANA**

Mr. HALL. I begin this 5-minute dissertation by sincerely thanking Representative Hill for his definite leadership and concern for this most important event in Montana’s history. On behalf of small businesses of the Flathead Valley, we truly thank you. We, as you know, are a minority, and it is real nice to know that we are being considered and given a voice at this most crucial time.

I don’t believe that the GNP is out to hurt small business, but I do believe that there are some inequities in the Alternative A road closures. I applaud the efforts put forth by GNP and by the reports and the willingness to listen to the community, so I would ask that you listen real carefully today to all that is brought before you.

The Federal Highway Administration proposed a 15-year reconstruction plan with partial closures and several untried measures to allow visitor use, but GNP did not offer this to us, and we are wondering why.

At Representative Hill’s last meeting in Kalispell, a man from the Department of Transportation told us how rock walls can be built on the Valley floor and be lifted in place, which can save many days and many dollars. Please listen to Mr. Hill’s suggestion of getting outside input for reconstruction ideas.

Another concern is that there has not been a formal engineering study done on the road, and that should be a concern for all of us. We must know all the facts before pushing hundreds of businesses to the edge of extinction. We have made everyone aware that up to this point there is not a citizens’ advisory board in place, and we just insist on having that in place before we move any further.

The economic study that was done at the University of Montana was good, but one of my concerns is the talk of promoting people to come and plan their vacation around observing the construction. No matter how you look at it or present it, it’s a bad deal. I know that if I’m going to spend an average of \$206 per person per day in the Park, why in the world would I want to spend it doing that? It would be a marketing miracle to pull that one off, and one we shouldn’t risk.

People who don’t own a business or whose hopes and dreams aren’t hinging on whether the road closes or not will get their say today and tomorrow, for example, newspapers, others whose jobs are not directly affected by the road being closed.

Please hear the heartfelt concerns of the business community. They will not be able to recover their businesses once closed.

I also believe that the public deserves a full and separate environmental and economic review of the options. Also, it seems that we may be putting the cart before the horse. We are beginning this process without committed funding. Are we going to close the Park for reconstruction and then try to get the funding? I would sincerely hope not.

There has been talk of the importance of communication and marketing. GNP needs to communicate to people now and forever that Logan Pass is and should always be open no matter what the scenario we come to. Once again, we must take the word "Closure" out of our vocabulary, literally.

Also, by the information given to the media and the press to this point about the road being shut down for reconstruction, we have had a minimum decline in tourism to the state of 20 percent. We cannot expect the general public to understand all that is going on at this end.

I also find it disturbing that the road reconstruction plan ended up in the General Management Plan in March. We got a basic explanation for that today, but I would ask that it be removed. NEPA, the National Environmental Policy Act, demands that any major construction of this nature must have its own Environmental Impact Statement. The construction of Going-to-the-Sun Road should be removed from the General Management Plan.

No one has ment around the other side, but don't advertise the C word.

No. 2, do everything possible to keep the \$160 million income and 2,400 jobs going strong in this area.

A suggestion by a local business directly affected by the proposal is to extend the Many Glacier Road to the North Fork Road, which would create a loop. This would allow repair of the road to happen at any time, even emergency closures by accidents, rock slides and so forth. It would also make opportunity for campsites off the North Fork Road from Camas Creek to Columbia Falls, thus taking pressure off of the Park.

Last—And I hate to end on this note, but to let you know how serious local businesses are to being sure that they are protected, there is in place substantial dollars from even only two businesses so far that would be applied to a class action lawsuit, if necessary, to protect our businesses and our futures, not a desired action.

Again, thank you very, very much for allowing me to express these grave concerns as an elected official along with the views of other local business people directly affected by the road closure idea. Please help us stay in business.

Respectfully submitted, Gary Hall, Mayor.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mayor Hall, for that valuable testimony. [The prepared statement of Mr. Hall may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Our next witness will be the Honorable County Commissioner Lowell Meznarich.

Mr. MEZNARICH. Meznarich.

Mr. HILL. Meznarich. I understand that. Rich and Rick. People confuse my name that way too. I apologize.

STATEMENT OF LOWELL MEZNARICH, GLACIER COUNTY COMMISSIONER

Mr. MEZNARICH. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is Lowell Meznarich, and I'm an elected commissioner representing Glacier County. All of Glacier National Park, which is east of the Continental Divide is in my county. Given that fact, all issues which affect Glacier National Park are important to us.

My fellow commissioners and I have cautiously monitored the discussions regarding the future maintenance and repair of the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park. Simultaneously, we have questioned the population to obtain their input on the matter at hand. I am pleased to have this opportunity to offer our collective thoughts.

No local issue in the past 5 years has seen greater scrutiny than the options given to repair the Going-to-the-Sun Road. All of the options will be harmful to the tourism industry in northwestern Montana. There is a solution, however.

The fast-track option, coupled with several other enhancements, has the potential to get the work done effectively, while also providing a unique opportunity to assist the east side of the Park in reducing its tourism loss. I am strongly in favor of the fast-track option and reducing the impact on the economy by taking advantage of an upcoming significant event.

Enhancement No. 1. The closure of the east side of the road should coincide with the observance of the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The large increase in visitors for the Bicentennial will help a great deal with the expected reduction in visitors to Glacier National Park because of the road work and closure. Planning to have these two events at the same time will be a tremendous benefit to Glacier County.

The years 2004 through 2006 would be ideal for the east side closure. This is important since within 25 miles of Cut Bank, the Glacier County seat are two of the most significant sites along the Lewis and Clark Trail. The first, Camp Disappointment, is where Meriweather Lewis and three of his party discovered that the Missouri River drainage did not cover as much territory to the north as originally hoped. The dreary, overcast day not only added to the disappointment, it also obscured the Rocky Mountains, which were just to the west.

Had the day been clearer, Lewis would have plainly seen the opening to Marias Pass, the lowest elevation pass through the Rocky Mountains. Lewis was within easy sight of one of his most significant potential discoveries, but he would never know. The possibilities of that missed discovery have been romanticized for years.

The fight site is the location of the following day's camp. At this site Lewis encountered and camped with a group of Blackfeet Indians. The following morning was the only armed conflict of the entire expedition. The fight over horses and weapons resulted in the death of two of the Blackfeet party and a close call for Lewis who wrote, "Being bare headed at the time, I plainly felt the ball pass over my head."

This encounter took place near the banks of the Two Medicine River in an area which historians consider the most primitive and least changed in the nearly 200 years since the explorers' journey. Use of this site will also provide an additional introduction to the Blackfeet Indian culture, which is another of the great treasures of our region.

The residents of Glacier County are quickly learning that the upcoming Bicentennial is gaining national and international attention. Already, Glacier County residents have taken the first few sparks of interest, added their entrepreneurial spirit and developed creative business ventures to cash in on the expected rush of adventuresome tourists. With the expected increase in visitors to our area I believe we can significantly reduce the negative impact of the closure of the east side of the road. A carefully crafted promotion would be very beneficial to Glacier County.

Enhancement No. 2. Regarding the Lewis and Clark Trail sites, we need assistance to improve access opportunities to the sites themselves. Traveling to each site presently requires driving on undeveloped roads, followed by a walk of up to one mile. The roads are one lane only and are often not more than slightly worn paths through the natural grass. The walk is over easy terrain, but the path is not clearly visible in many areas.

Any improvement should maintain the present condition of the sites and not detract from the natural state each site presently enjoys. As such, many portions of the road and trail will merely need simple markings to keep the traveler on the proper path. Other areas may need compaction work and/or a light gravel application.

Much like the work in Glacier National Park, any improvements to these sites must preserve and protect the area. Little has changed since Lewis appeared at these sites. We need to keep it that way, since that is precisely why these sites appeal to a significant number of Americans. These improvements could be accomplished with a very small amount of funding.

Both sites are located on and accessible only through private land. I believe we must immediately pursue public acquisition of the sites and access. If that not possible, in the least we must have agreements in place which allow for public maintenance and access when appropriate.

Glacier National Park Enhancement No. 3. Glacier National Park must do everything in its power to trumpet what is available to the visitors and downplay the Going-to-the-Sun Road closure. We don't need the headline to scream that the road is closed. Instead, leading up to and during the east side closure, national and international promotions should extol the uncommon beauty of our many east side areas, Two Medicine, St. Mary's, Many Glaciers and even Canada's Waterton National Park.

Promoting jointly with Waterton should become a priority. The opportunities to experience the Lewis and Clark sites should also be a significant part of the promotion.

Enhancement No. 4 has been discussed. Let's get the job done. Let's not have the types of delays that have plagued previous construction projects.

Enhancement No. 5. Glacier National Park must accept primary responsibility for repair and maintenance of Highway 49, which is known as the Looking Glass Road. This road is the north/south link between East Glacier Park, Two Medicine and St. Mary's.

The road was originally constructed by the National Park Service and for years was maintained by them. Since it is outside the Park boundary, the Park Service has chosen to allow the road to deteriorate. At present the Looking Glass Road is generally open on the same calendar used by Glacier National Park. The road is not maintained during the winter. Like the Sun Road, the Looking Glass offers a unique view of Glacier National Park, which is just to the west of the road. The road itself winds along the slopes of the moun Glass Road.

With these five easily attainable enhancements, I'm confident the Park Service will find general support for the road repair project.

Mr. Chairman, that concludes my formal comments.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mr. Meznarich.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Meznarich may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Again, I would just urge all those submitting testimony to try to stay as close as you can to the 5-minute limit.

Our next testimony will come from Joe Unterreiner, executive vice-president of the Kalispell Area Chamber of Commerce.

Thank you for appearing, Joe.

STATEMENT OF JOE UNTERREINER, PRESIDENT, ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF THE FLATHEAD VALLEY

Mr. UNTERREINER. I am executive vice-president of the Kalispell Chamber. I was invited to speak as the president of the Associated Chambers.

The Associated Chamber group is an association of six chambers of commerce and three tourism organizations, consisting of 1,800 businesses and organizations in northwest Montana, and, Congressman, I'd like to applaud your efforts to understand this issue, its implications for northwest Montana's economy and the steps that you've taken to ensure the best possible course of action is taken. We would like to recognize and express our appreciation for your efforts.

The Sun Road is a critical economic, social, cultural and historic asset of this area. There is, perhaps, no other singular resource in

the Flathead that effects more people both personally and professionally than the Sun Road. It is essential that this road be maintained and repaired in a way that provides for the enjoyment of future generations while minimizing the economic and social impact to the current generation.

There are several things we think that Congress can do to help achieve this goal: One, ensure that the best possible road construction expertise is applied to this engineering challenge and make impact reduction the highest priority; two, provide public education funding to minimize projected visitation losses as part of the appropriation request; three, provide financial relief for those businesses most severely affected by the negative impacts of reconstruction; four, utilize business input; and, five, provide adequate funding for national park roads.

I'd first like to note that data from the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreational Research has indicated that 25 percent of nonresident tourists to Montana come here primarily to see Glacier National Park. This is a destination tourism attraction that benefits not just the Glacier areas, but other cities and towns that line the roads to and from the Park. They come because the Going-to-the-Sun Road, a national historic landmark, offers some of the most spectacular scenery anywhere in North America.

The National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration have developed three concepts for preserving the road. We think this is a good start, and we'd like to see a process begun that further refines these alternatives. The two economic impact studies have both concluded that the fast-track option, the 4- to 6-year option has the least economic impact and the lowest cost of construction, and this is the Park's preferred alternative.

However, it is now time to refine the two action alternatives by using the best experts available, including financial incentive to complete the work as quickly as possible and completing the formal engineering study.

The findings of two economic studies on this issue indicate that the quicker construction is completed the more negative impacts are minimized. Therefore, every effort should be made to explore techniques that might hasten the reconstruction period. Sections of retaining wall might be prefabricated offsite, for example, or perhaps some international firms that have extensive expertise in high-altitude road work might have innovations to offer.

We'd like to see a bid structure that provides incentives for early completion. If we examine the reconstruction of Interstate 10 in Los Angeles after the Northridge quake, we can see how financial incentives were effectively used. The time of completion was substantially reduced by running around-the-clock shifts. This more aggressive approach might reduce the time of the fast-track option or reduce the time on the accelerated option to a more acceptable timeframe. If the National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration are prohibited from using such incentives for early completion, we urge Congress to waive that restriction for this project.

We would like to also indicate our support for the efforts of Congressman Hill and Senator Burns to have a formal engineering

study produced on the Sun Road. We may find that some sections do not need reconstruction.

In any event, loss of visitation and its resulting impact on business losses must be viewed as real costs in preserving the Sun Road. Early completion incentives can be justified when weighed against the total cost of economic loss and the impact on communities. Reducing these negative impacts must be given our highest priority.

We'd like to see an appropriation request include a fully funded—fully developed public education program to help offset visitor losses. We think that this can help offset—And we encourage Congress to fund and implement a plan prior to commencement of construction with sufficient investment to continue to educate and inform the public.

As I indicated, I'd like to also see a program to help offset—impact those businesses that are most severely affected. We'd like to see something that would address those businesses as well.

I'd like to call your attention to a survey that was conducted of 550 businesses, area businesses here in the Flathead Valley, of which 120 responded to. Sixty percent of those businesses also prefer the fast-track reconstruction option, with 20 percent favoring the accelerated reconstruction, 6 percent for the status quo.

I'd like to conclude by saying that the Sun Road is a main attraction to some of the most beautiful scenery in North America, and it is disintegrating. There's no perfect time to rebuild a stretch of road that presents some of the most difficult conditions imaginable, but given the recent increase in funding for the highway bill and the current budget surplus, we should act now while the window of opportunity is still available. We could choose to delay or study further or do nothing at all, but if we do, we risk losing the road altogether.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much, Joe. Thank you for those valuable comments, and I'll be looking forward to asking you some more detailed questions about those.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Unterreiner may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. The next witness is Roger Running Crane, who is vice-chairman of the Blackfeet Nation.

Mr. Running Crane, thank you for being here. We look forward to your testimony.

STATEMENT OF ROGER RUNNING CRANE, VICE-CHAIRMAN, BLACKFEET NATION

Mr. RUNNING CRANE. Good morning. I bring you greetings from the Blackfeet Nation and would like to first of all thank the Honorable Rick Hill, who sits on the House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks and Lands for scheduling this hearing and allowing us to provide testimony for the record.

My name is Roger Running Crane, vice-chairman of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, which is the governing body of the Blackfeet Nation.

Historically, Glacier National Park was part of the original land base of the Blackfeet people and later was transferred to the hands of the U.S. Government through a treaty in 1896. We still claim

treaty rights in the Park that include privileges to hunt, fish and gather wood.

Presently, our western boundary of the Blackfeet Reservation is Glacier National Park. I point this out because it documents our presence before and after the creation of the Park that serves as a showcase for the entire world to enjoy its natural beauty.

With that said, the Blackfeet Nation would simply like to offer their human and natural resources in the proposed future maintenance and repair of the Going-to-the-Sun Road. These resources consist of a qualified work force, unlimited amounts of and access to gravel and other road construction materials. We have land adjacent to the Park for recreational and campground use by the tourists who may wish to choose to visit only the east side of Logan Pass when the Going-to-the-Sun Road is under construction.

Finally, the Tribe also offers any other resources in assisting the Park Service to make the construction phase an experience that we can all benefit from.

In closing, Congressman Hill, the Tribe is sensitive to the economic downside of the tourism industry if the road construction is to occur. By not being viable participants in that industry for reasons that I will not go into, we simply want to maximize the economic opportunities for our people who are at the lowest economic rungs of the ladder in this country. Any economic stimulus for our people is welcomed, and I'm sure the surrounding communities in the Blackfeet Country would agree as well, since they, too, reap the benefits of those dollars.

Again, thank you for this opportunity, and we reserve the right to send additional documents for the record within a 10-day time period after this hearing. Thank you.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mr. Running Crane, and that is true. The record will be held open for 10 days to make it an official part of the record, and, obviously, if folks have other comments, they can make those comments to our office, and we will do everything we can to get them either in the record at this hearing or a subsequent hearing.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Running Crane may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. I apologize to people back there. Evidently, our sound system has had some malfunction. Can you still hear back there? Can you hear the testimony in the back? OK. We will proceed, then, with Mr. Richard Hunt, vice-president of Friends of Glacier.

Thank you, Mr. Hunt, for being here. We look forward to your testimony.

Mr. HUNT. Thank you, Mr. Chairman, panel members and interested persons. Thank you for this opportunity to appear before you.

Mr. HILL. You need to turn that mike on. I don't think it's on. Just wait a moment. Let's see if we can get the volume—

[Discussion off the record.]

Mr. HILL. We're ready to go.

Mr. Hunt, you may proceed.

**STATEMENT OF RICHARD B. HUNT, VICE-PRESIDENT,
FRIENDS OF GLACIER, INC.**

Mr. HUNT. Thank you.

Friends of Glacier was formed with the purpose of assuring access to Glacier National Park and opposing any plans to diminish access during the publication of and hearings on the draft Newsletters in 1997, which related to the General Management Plan for Glacier National Park.

By 1924 Park officials had promoted a goal to enable people to reach the interior of the Park even if they could not afford the rates of the Great Northern Railroad and its chalets. In 1925 the Bureau of Public Roads began to oversee the building of the Going-to-the-Sun Road, which traversed Logan Pass and connected the east and the west and gave the people the opportunity to reach the interior of the Park. In 1933, Park officials attained their goal as visitation increased by 44 percent with the completion of the road.

This 22 miles of the most difficult stretch of the proposed road was completed with primitive equipment by today's standards. In the Management Plan developed by Glacier Park planners, the preferred alternative fast-track reconstruction of the road plans on 4 to 6 years to complete utilizing the most modern technology and equipment available, only eight miles more than that done from 1925 to 1933. Alpine road construction techniques of today should be able to do better.

However, that is only part of the story. Several other shortcomings are presented in the GMP related to the Going-to-the-Sun Road. Two critical issues were identified by the Park planners related to the road: Visitor use on the Going-to-the-Sun Road and preservation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

One, in the preferred alternative of the first issue, several actions to be taken relate to an expanded transportation system, modifying and/or adding pullouts, picnic areas and short trails, although it is interesting to consider adding picnic areas on the Going-to-be-the-Sun Road while removing one at the developed area also on the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

There is little in the plan which identifies the impact of those actions on the newly completed reconstruction. In our view, some linkage should be in the GMP.

Two, in the preferred alternative of the second issue, several criteria were established to develop the preferred, to minimize impacts on the visitors and minimize impacts on the local economy. The GMP suggests that local business persons would have time to develop the mitigation for the impact of closing one side of the Park's Going-to-the-Sun Road for 2 to 3 years, then close the other side for 2 to 3 years. It is the Park's criteria. Yet the GMP says little about how the Park would assist in such a minimization plan. The GMP also says little about measures to be taken to minimize the impact on the visitor. These two areas of the General Management Plan are deficient in our view.

One of the most disturbing deficiencies in the GMP is also related to one other aspect of this oversight hearing, maintenance. Little is said about the long-term need to maintain the Going-to-the-Sun Road after it is reconstructed. This GMP is to provide guidance to the Park for 20 or so years. Yet preservation of the road also means maintenance, and maintenance deserves a place in the General Management Plan.

Friends of Glacier recognizes and applauds plans to improve access by adding pullouts, picnic areas, short trails and emphasis upon a safe Going-to-the-Sun Road for visitors to appreciate one of the premier experiences in the Park, which is to traverse the road from east to west and west to east. We also recognize and appreciate the Plan's efforts to preserve the Park and to preserve this Park as a traditional western park.

Friends of Glacier stands ready to participate in finding solutions to some of the shortcomings we see in the GMP. Directors and officers of Friends of Glacier attended the meeting held in Kalispell by Representative Rick Hill in June 1998. Many ideas were presented, including the suggestion that more time was needed to examine the data and to consider forming an advisory group with alpine road construction experts, local business persons and interested persons to determine effective economical methods of construction, time-frame and strategy with the least impact on local, regional and international economies as well as other activities which would mitigate the effects of this necessary and important project.

Park planners tell us on page 50 of the Draft General Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement, that the National Park Service prefers an alternative that conforms to a certain set of criteria, and from available information, Alternative A, the fast-track reconstruction, 4 to 6 years, appears best to satisfy those criteria. However—and I quote—"If new data and analyses revealed information that would better respond to the criteria, a different alternative would be selected in the final plan." Emphasis added. How would this data and analyses be revealed to the Park planners?

In summary, Friends of Glacier continue to support the broadest possible access to Glacier National Park. We ask that our testimony will cause the Park planners and this Committee to seek ways to improve the connection between the two critical issues discussed, visitor use on Going-on-the-Sun Road and preservation of Going-to-the-Sun Road.

We are not suggesting specific actions at this time. As indicated, Friends of Glacier stands ready to be a part of any method for arriving at solutions to those shortcomings we have identified.

Thank you, Chairman Hill, for the opportunity to present our views and our questions.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mr. Hunt, for that valuable input, and I look forward to fleshing some of that out.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Hunt may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Our last panelist will be, last but not least, Mr. Will Brooke, who is owner of the St. Mary's KOA Campground.

Thank you for appearing, Mr. Brooke. You may proceed.

**STATEMENT OF WILL BROOKE, PRESIDENT, GLACIER/
WATERTON VISITOR ASSOCIATION**

Mr. BROOKE. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I can't tell you how nice it is to call you Mr. Chairman and Mr. Congressman after all these years. I wish Mr. Hanson were here so we could recall the days when it wasn't Mr. Chairman but Member of the Minority. It's nice to see you as Member of the Majority now.

First, I want to correct. It's St. Mary. It's not St. Mary's. Second, I want to correct. I appear here today as president of the Glacier/Waterton Visitor Association. We are a collection of businesses throughout the Park and around the Park, including Canada, and some of our Members have been providing service to the visitors of Glacier for over 65 years and know and understand the issues around the Park as well as anybody in the country.

I speak of Roscoe Black and his family at St. Mary, Lisa Lundgren and her family at West Glacier. These people understand these issues very well and need to be listened to carefully. They have the historical memory, if you will, that some of us don't have the benefit of.

The Association wants to be clear that in the first instance we commend the Park Service for what they're doing in terms of focusing attention on the maintenance, improvement and protection of the Going-to-the-Sun Road. It is a critical issue, and I would agree with Mr. Mihalic today that the easiest thing for him to do and for the Park Service to do would have been to let somebody else deal with this. That certainly has been the case previously, and I think that the Park Service is the victim of deferred maintenance by prior administrations, lack of attention by the public to what was building up as a result of the deferred maintenance, and Congress has had its finger in this problem by removing funding, critical funding for some of the maintenance.

But notwithstanding these problems, I think that the Park Service and what they're proposing in the General Management Plan specific to the Going-to-the-Sun Road is premature at this time. It is at a minimum based on improper procedure and public involvement, and at a maximum it may be just plain wrong.

We hope the Park Service is not wrong. In fact, if the Park Service is ultimately correct in its proposed action, we will get behind the Park Service and help in every way possible by assisting and obtaining necessary funding from Congress, working with public relations and information to mitigate the perception that the Park is closed and, otherwise, working with the Park Service. However, whether the Park Service is correct is the key issue as we sit here today.

And, Mr. Congressman Hill, you put your finger on it, as you have the ability to so often do. There's a chicken and egg here, a cart before the horse question. The Federal Highways is saying, Well, we're not going to do the detailed engineering until the Park Service chooses their preferred alternative. How in the world can you choose a preferred alternative without detailed engineering studies? It doesn't make sense, and it's inappropriate to proceed that way.

The EIS for the General Management Plan has been proceeding through the NEPA process for several years now. The section for the Going-to-the-Sun in the Draft Management Plan is new. It wasn't in the former Management Plan. It came out, and it proposes a major significant new Federal action with enormous impacts to the environment and the economy.

You've heard about those impacts, the economic impact from the other witnesses, and I'm not going to continue those, but you asked the question or you pointed out that you had several concerns

about how they did the economic studies. Well, I'll point out just one point. In the plan it talks about 2,400 jobs may be affected or are affected by the Park. Our membership can account for 2,000 jobs just through our members, so we know that 2,400 jobs is entirely inappropriate and a wrong number and a bad number. How they came up with it I don't know, but it points up bigger and larger problems, that they're using information that is, I guess, not entirely well researched or thought out.

More importantly, going back to what I was saying, we're proposing a major Federal action in the General Management Plan. The last-minute inclusion in the plan of a major new Federal action does not comply with the letter or the spirit of NEPA and the EIS process. It has not been properly scoped, we believe, and the information and studies and data supporting the action are nothing more than generalities, and there's a general failure to consider all of the appropriate alternatives.

The General Management Plan is a general guide of how the Federal land should be managed, usually for a period of about 10 years. The proposal for the Sun Road is not consistent with this principle. Rather, it is site specific, date specific and project specific. We believe the decision to do anything with the road of this magnitude necessarily requires and commands a separate plan and a separate Environmental Impact Statement.

There are alternatives that are not in this plan which we believe should have at least been considered or explained why they were not considered. The Federal Highway Administration analyzed at least one other alternative, from what we can tell from the information we've gathered, and it appears that there might be some merit to that alternative, but the Park Service didn't include it in the EIS, nor did they explain why the alternative was not considered, and I think it points up a larger point with this plan.

To use a old, worn-out cliché, when you look at the EIS, you ask the question, Where is the beef?

You compared it to looking at impacts on threatened and endangered species, so you can bet, if we were doing a timber sale or if we were doing some other kind of major Federal action that effected threatened and endangered species, we would have an enormous Environmental Impact Statement with studies that attached to it that went on forever, and appropriately so, but when we talk about economic impacts, we choose to do generalities. We choose to rely upon studies that are questionable at best, and I'll point that out, and I see the time is up, and I'll get out.

The survey that they relied upon, as you pointed out, is questionable, and one of things they did was, they surveyed people that had been to the Park.

The tourism business is extremely competitive, and there are states and countries spending hundreds of thousands of dollars advertising. Come to our state. Come to our area. They asked people who had went over the road, Would you come back under various scenarios? The appropriate way to do that kind of survey is to go back to somebody in Minnesota, somebody in Texas, somebody in Michigan, who has maybe requested information from the Montana Tourism Bureau, and ask them, you know, If the road is closed or

partially closed, would you still come? I think you're going to get a much different answer. They're sampling the wrong population.

They also continuously point out that 80 percent said they would come back. If you read that survey, when you talk about closure, you talk about 60 percent coming back, and, unfortunately, when you talk about closure of any kind, people have the perception of closure.

The last thing I want to say is that, we're talking about possibly starting in the year 2004. A lot of us are making long-term financial commitments to capital improvements to build our businesses and to make improvements that result in lots of jobs and lots of money invested in the local economy. We cannot go to our financial institutions and say, Look, We've got a possibility of road closure in the year 2004. This thing has to be laid out with longer term commitments so that we can go back and get long-term financing to do the kind of capital improvements that we want to do, and we have to have it far enough out in front of us that we can make the appropriate kind of planning. This doesn't do it.

The association requests that the EIS or that section on the road be pulled out and a separate EIS done. We think that's appropriate, given the magnitude of this kind of decision.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Mr. Brooke.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Brooke may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. I have quite a few questions, and let me start with Mayor Hall.

What are the people in Columbia Falls saying when you talk to them about this reconstruction effort? What do you hear them—What are they saying to you?

Mr. HALL. Through the tears, they are saying that there's no possible way they would be able to recover from the loss that would be incurred by this Alternative A.

We are marginal at best anyway. We are probably the closest large population community close to the Park, and the business is two and a half to 3 months strong, and the impact that it would have on these small businesses would be too much to recover from at the end of this reconstruction process. That's the main theme.

Mr. HILL. One of the troubling things, in reading the Management Plan with reference to this, is the sense that, you have the time from now to the year 2004 to prepare your business for the economic impact. How does a businessman—

And I'd ask anyone else who wants to answer this question. As a former business owner, how do you prepare your business for being out of business for 2 or 3 or 4 or 5 or 6 years? Do you know any way that a business can prepare for that kind of an event?

Mr. HALL. It's a good question, and I don't have an answer for it because I don't think there is one. There really isn't an answer to that.

Mr. HILL. You can't prepare?

Mr. HALL. You can't.

Mr. HILL. Joe, do you want to comment on that? I mean, you've testified that you think that—I hate this word “Fast track” by the way. I'd just comment that fast track also refers to trade authority that's a matter of some controversy.

I was answering the telephones in my office as people were calling in on another issue, and one evening a lady called in. It was kind of a feeble voice, and she said, Tell the Congressman that he should oppose fast track. The trains are already going too fast. When you talk about fast track, some people may think the train is going too fast here.

Anyway, Joe, go ahead.

Mr. UNTERREINER. I guess I see those kinds of arguments as the reason why there needs to be some kind of program for financial relief offered to the people that are most severely affected, and I don't—it doesn't get any easier by drawing it out longer, so I see that partially as an argument for getting it over as quickly as possible and, hopefully, providing some kind of relief in the same way that people who are devastated by an earthquake in San Francisco or Los Angeles or a hurricane in Florida or people who are provided air conditioners in Texas by the Federal Government are benefited. There must be some way to provide some kind of relief for those businesses that are most severely effected.

Mr. HILL. What you see happening or what you anticipate happening is some effort on the part of Congress for what, some sort of a loan program or grant program? What is it you contemplate there?

Mr. UNTERREINER. I guess that is why I'd like to see some kind of an effort made to see if there is a precedent for either National Park Service roads or for any of the Federal Highway Administration roads. For example, whether there is a precedent out there that exists currently and if there is not, I guess I would envision something along the lines of something through the Small Business Administration or certainly with the CRP program for—In ag they take a look at a business and see how much income is generated off of a certain acreage of land.

There is a general precedent. Whether there exists a precedent for Federal Highway Administration roads, I don't know, but I think that that's something that should be explored.

Mr. HILL. Do you think there's a way for us to be able to accomplish this task without having a dramatic impact on the businesses?

Mr. UNTERREINER. Well, I think that there are ways to help minimize the impact, and I see one of the major things there is providing for funding for public education, and I would like to see that be part of the appropriation request, that there be some substantial kinds of public education dollars and a fully developed program put together prior to the beginning of construction actually to accompany the appropriation request, and I think that that could go a long way to helping offset visitor losses.

Mr. HILL. There's a general perception, I think, or at least I think most of us have the perception, that the people believe that when the road is closed the Park is closed, and if you can't go on the road completely, then there's no sense in visiting the Park. Is that what you're talking about is some education effort as part of this to convince people that it's still a worthy experience to come to the Park even if there is some road closure associated with it?

Mr. UNTERREINER. Yes, and I would see it even broader than that, to include other kinds of activities in the gateway communities.

The University of Montana study indicated that 75—between 75 and 80 percent of the total impact that would be felt by the reconstruction options would be felt locally, that is, in the gateway communities, and that includes Glacier County. So I would like to see funding in place and a fully developed kind of public education or marketing program that outlined other kinds of activities that would—that could occur, other kinds of vacation stops that could occur in all of the gateway communities in the Glacier area.

Mr. HILL. Are the local chambers of commerce prepared to put some resources to that effort as well?

Mr. UNTERREINER. Absolutely. All of our meager resources might be available.

Mr. HILL. Any others that would care to comment on these series of questions that I have?

Mr. BROOKE. As to your question about, How do businesses plan to be closed? I think, you know, it goes back to the original question, Have we explored all the alternatives, and is that really the only option here? It might be. If it is, I can tell you that this business person makes decisions further out than 4 years.

And the other thing that we rely upon when we make the decisions is good information. Right now the Park Service, in its plan, is talking about a 4- to 6-year closure, 2 to 3 on each side. The Federal Highway talks about the need to know—They have a detailed list of essential requirements that agencies must adhere to to meet the estimated time lines and costs for these alternatives.

One of those is the threatened and endangered species effect, and the Park Service hasn't dealt with that issue.

The bottom line is, Is 2 to 3 years on each side realistic when you're talking about these essential requirements and having to meet those that might affect your time line? So, you know, when you go into looking at the possibility of having to pull up the bootstraps, you've got to know what you're looking at.

You can't say, Well, it might be 2 years, and it might be 6 years. You can't say, It might be 80 million, and it might be 210 million. That doesn't make sense, and I think it points out that the Park Service has got to get better information. They have to have more focus, and they need to do some of the things like you're talking about, engineering studies before they select the alternative, not after.

Mr. HILL. And is your association ready to work with the Park Service in addressing the issues you just raised?

Mr. BROOKE. Absolutely. In fact, we wanted to get involved in helping to produce another alternative, and we had discussed about the notion of approaching Congress for funding to do some engineering studies, because we can't come up with the kind of funding to do that. The Park Service didn't think that was appropriate because they thought it a violation of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

I disagree with that. I think that we could help come up with another alternative. At a minimum we can be involved in some kind of advisory panel on this issue.

Mr. HILL. I want to ask all the panel members to respond to this question. You've raised the suggestion, Will, that we should have a separate EIS for the Road than the Management Plan. Is there some middle ground here?

One of the arguments against that is that we'll have two full-blown EIS's substantially addressing some overlapping issues, because the General Management Plan for the Park has to have included a contemplation of what's going to happen to the Road. I don't think you can implement the General Management Plan without some conclusion that the Road is going to be reconstructed or not.

The other aspect of that is this, is that—I mean, I agree that we ought to consider the issues associated with the Road operated separate from the rest of the Management Plan, but I don't know that the right conclusion is a separate EIS. One of the arguments against that, frankly, is that, if you have a separate EIS on the Road, then it puts us back to base one again on the conclusions that Mr. Hunt has raised in his testimony, and that is, Should we even rebuild the Road at all, or should we replace it with some sort of mass transit?

I would ask you, No. 1, is there some middle ground? I'd ask each of you to address that question, whether or not you think there should be a separate full EIS, or do you think that the decision with regard to proceeding with the Road could be handled under a single EIS but managed separately. Would each of you respond to that?

Mr. BROOKE. I think it could be done that way, and you're right. It probably, in the long-term, makes more sense. I guess the way we came about our decision was, we saw there was this desire to get moving with the General Management Plan, but they came up with this major new section that proposes a major new Federal action—

Mr. HILL. Right.

Mr. BROOKE. [continuing] during the process.

Mr. HILL. I mean, it has to be addressed in the EIS. We all know that.

Mr. BROOKE. Right. We figured, you know, let the General Management Plan proceed forward. We'll pull this issue out, look at it separately. I tend to think they are intertwined, but based on the information and data they now have in the EIS, it's woefully inadequate to make any kind of even comment on that part of the plan.

Mr. HILL. But that's the specifics of the alternative?

Mr. BROOKE. Right.

Mr. HILL. Do you agree that we need to reconstruct the Road and maintain the Road?

Mr. BROOKE. Absolutely.

Mr. HILL. OK. I'd like each of you to respond to that series of questions. I don't remember what they were. You do.

Mr. HUNT. Do we remember? Oh, yeah. Right.

I can't advocate on behalf of Friends of Glacier that the Park should complete a new EIS on the Going-on-the-Sun Road. I don't think that would be appropriate because we do not have that kind of information from our 700 mailing list yet that that would be appropriate, but as officers and directors, we have discussed the

issue, and we do not have agreement that it should be pulled from the plan or left in.

Personally, I believe that it would be beneficial to remove at least some aspects of it from the plan because I do believe that, as they study the reconstruction aspect of the Road, they also must study what those additives to the Road would mean in terms of the impact, that is, the pullouts, the short trails, the picnic areas, the scenic oversights, overviews and so forth, and I think all of that needs to be put together before they say, This is how we're going to do the Road.

Mr. HILL. I guess the point here being is that, is it possible in your mind that, in the Management Plan—I don't want to get into a lot of detail about the Management Plan, but you're right. Those are important elements of the General Management Plan that are also specific to the Road. The conclusion could be drawn in the Management Plan and the EIS for the Management Plan that we're going to reconstruct the Road and that the reconstructed Road would have those features but that we have a parallel track with regard to how we go about accomplishing the reconstruction of the Road without necessarily requiring a separate full EIS.

Whether they build it short-term or long-term, they're still going to have to find out where they locate gravel pits and where they're going to try to locate hot plants and how they're going to accomplish the staging, the scheduling of the work and how it's going to impact endangered species. That's all going to have to be considered, but it would be nice to get the conclusion behind us that the right decision is to rebuild the Road and to rebuild the Road with the features you just described. Would you agree with that?

Mr. HUNT. Yes, I would agree with that, and I think that our members would agree with that too, that they can adopt the plan in terms—with those conditions within the plan and by fleshing out aspects of the plan which would show how they're going to take care of all of those issues, and among the endangered species that might be there are those local business people, not just in this country, but in Canada we have heard reports from the members of the Waterton/Glacier Visitors' Association in Canada what kind of an impact it would have. If the people don't come to Glacier, how many of them are not going to come to Waterton?

We have to remember, this is the Waterton/Glacier International Peace Park, so it's not two things. It's one thing.

How many people would go to Calgary, for instance? I was surprised to hear the numbers of people that come to Glacier and then say, Oh, let's go to Calgary too.

So, yes, I would agree that it could be accomplished within the framework of the adoption of a plan, but specifically indicating you're going to add those elements to it.

Mr. HILL. Before you pass the microphone, I would just ask your group too. Does your group stand ready to participate with Glacier National Park officials to try to help advise in trying to reach the right conclusion here?

Mr. HUNT. Our group is ready, as I've indicated, to stand—to help. We have offered help in the past, and we're willing to offer help in the future. Since our primary purpose and our goals are re-

lated to access, we feel probably that's the best place for us to be used.

Mr. HILL. And how many members do you have in your group?

Mr. HUNT. Well, we have 700 people who have been responding to questionnaires, and we indicated to them if they responded that constituted a membership. There are no dues to belong to the Friends of Glacier.

Mr. HILL. And you stand ready to join with others to help educate the public that the Park—we still have a Park even though—

Mr. HUNT. Absolutely. Yeah.

Mr. HILL. Thank you. Mr. Meznarich, would you care to comment?

Mr. MEZNARICH. Yes. Thank you. I'll pick up right where Richard left off.

Glacier County, the local development office of Glacier County, the local chamber of commerce all would stand ready to assist in that process.

As my testimony stated, we very much need to promote that, simply because the Sun Road is closed, portions are closed, does not mean the Park is off limits, and I think reconstruction is definitely required. We have some serious problems there. No, I do not think we need a separate EIS. I believe separate management of those issues is appropriate.

Your earlier question about how a business prepares to be closed I think is addressed by the options, and on the east side we have the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial option. That's something that's very significant. Perhaps the west side is not aware of the significance of that prospect.

We have a member, a resident of Glacier County, who is on the Governor's Bicentennial Committee, and he reported to us that the United States will spend more money on the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial than they spent on the United States Bicentennial.

Those are big dollars, and we're looking forward to having that type of an impact, and we're seeing that already six or so years prior to the Bicentennial, seeing a great deal more interest in those sites, which are in very close proximity to Cut Bank.

Mr. HILL. As you may or may not know, I have formed a Lewis and Clark caucus at the House of Representatives for the purpose of trying to raise the profile of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. I would just caution you about the expectation that Congress is going to authorize more money for this than they did for the nation's Bicentennial, however. I don't know that there's anywhere near that kind of consensus.

We did, of course, move forward with the coin and some other things, but we do want to focus the resources of the Federal Government on making sure that the recognition of that Bicentennial is there.

Let me ask you this question, though. Presuming—we don't know the answer to this question, but if you found that your proposed plan had negative impacts on the west side, in other words, it may benefit your community, but it worked to the disadvantage of the people on the other side, would you still strongly advocate it?

Mr. MEZNARICH. Glacier County has a long history of supporting things that are generally beneficial for the Park, and the economic statistics will stand to prove that, that the east side is significantly less impacted than the west side. The fact that there are communities the size of Kalispell, Columbia Falls, with Mayor Hall here being a border community to Glacier, is a significant part of that.

We don't have that in Glacier County. We have small spatterings, East Glacier, St. Mary, Browning and then Cut Bank, the furthest away from there. Our population base is significantly less. The Blackfeet Reservation plays a part in that, and perhaps Mr. Running Crane could address that too.

We don't see the economic impact that the west side does. Yet we still fully support that knowing that there might be some trickle, we would expect, to benefit Glacier County.

My proposal to add maintenance to the Looking Glass Road would significantly improve opportunities for the west side, because those visitors would have a shorter distance to travel to get around the lower boundary down to Highway 2 and over to the west side during portions of the closure.

Mr. HILL. Whose responsibility is the Looking Glass Road at this point?

Mr. MEZNARICH. No one has taken responsibility for that road. The National Park Service has, basically, abandoned it, then asked, about 2 years ago, for the County and the State and the Tribe and various other agencies to step in there and take a look at it.

Mr. HILL. There is no legal responsibility for that road?

Mr. MEZNARICH. The research has not indicated any ownership obligation.

Mr. HILL. We have that problem on the Beartooth Highway too.

Has anybody done any engineering analysis, any analysis of what it would take to address that road in terms of cost of reconstruction or significant maintenance?

Mr. MEZNARICH. Significant maintenance has been addressed. I couldn't speak specifically about those dollar amounts.

Mr. HILL. Could you provide that for me for the record, whatever you have?

Mr. MEZNARICH. Yes, we could.

Mr. HILL. Could you also take the responsibility to determine if the State or the Tribe have done any evaluations of that and provide whatever is available in the record and try to get it to us?

Mr. MEZNARICH. We will provide whatever is available.

Mr. HILL. Thank you.

[The information referred to may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Mr. Hall.

Mr. HALL. One of your questions was about financial support in the advertising aspect and the promotion of things—the money loss by the 20-percent decrease to the fund, the bed tax fund is going to be significantly lower, and it would be hard-pressed to come up with finances to help support that.

One of the reasons, even in my statement that I suggested another EIS be done is—It was based kind of on a fear of the lack of comprehensive planning in the GMP, and it was a fear that maybe that is one issue that wasn't covered. I'm learning as we're

going here. I'm not in favor of a new EIS. It could have a significant hindrance to the project going forward.

Mr. HILL. But would you agree that maybe there's a middle ground here—

Mr. HALL. Yes.

Mr. HILL. [continuing] the idea of working with one EIS, but trying to have two track here?

Mr. HALL. Absolutely. Actually, that's the only way I think it will work successfully. You know, it should be pulled from the GMP partially also because it would give opportunity for your suggestion of other engineers having an opportunity to look at this project and offer input.

As I stated in my testimony, at your June meeting there was someone there, I believe, from the Federal Department of Transportation stating that there is ways to build a wall on the Valley floor and transport it to the site.

So there is alternatives we have not heard anything about, so it causes grave concern. We want to hear more. We know there is other alternatives.

Mr. UNTERREINER. I think Ms. Jacoby had pointed out that really what we have is some concepts about how the road can be done. The alternatives haven't been fully engineered, and so I think, at this point, they are concepts, and there's a lot more work that needs to be done. I kind of view what we have as a beginning to refine the alternatives, but probably not as they exist kind of final in their current form.

However, maybe I'm more optimistic than some of the other panelists that the concerns that have been expressed here can be worked out within the existing document and that there is really nothing to be gained by rehashing it all and another couple hundred thousand dollar Environmental Impact Statement and—

Mr. HILL. Couple hundred thousand?

Mr. UNTERREINER. Yeah. Or more.

Mr. HILL. A lot more.

Mr. UNTERREINER. And more time spent on that. I'd like to see us work within the existing document.

Mr. HILL. I'd just make the comment that the preliminary estimate of the cost of doing the Environmental Impact Statement on the Beartooth Highway, which has some issues similar to this, a 30-mile, I think, stretch of highway, alpine—I mean, you're all familiar with that—is about \$6 million, just a frightening sum of money, but I'd just point out that two EIS's could add dramatically to the cost.

Mr. Running Crane, would you care to comment on any of that?

Mr. RUNNING CRANE. Yes. Being a newly elected council here, we have not discussed a separate EIS for the road construction at this point in time, but we did have concerns of the alternative route, and that would be the Looking Glass Road that was discussed here earlier, and, you know, we'd come to the conclusion, Who has benefited the most from the Looking Glass Road? Nobody wants to claim ownership of the road at this point in time, but there is studies of the maintenance of the road, and I guess—

Mr. HILL. Would you provide that for the Committee?

Mr. RUNNING CRANE. I sure will. I will provide the study for you on that part there.

[The information referred to may be found at end of hearing.]

Mr. HILL. Excuse me. Is it the Tribe's view that Congress should address that issue in terms of—in the context of the overall Management Plan of the Park or in the context of the Going-to-the-Sun Highway?

Mr. RUNNING CRANE. I would say—In my own personal view, I should say, yes, the Congress should address this, but that is one of the things that is one of our biggest concerns right now is the Looking Glass Road, you know, as an alternative route, when the closure of the Going-to-the-Sun Road is being constructed here, but that is a good, viable road there if we can ever get that to operational again and the safety of the road at this point in time.

Mr. HILL. Again, I'm going to—If you'd keep the microphone there, I'm going to ask all of you to answer this question, too, and then, after this question, I think we'll probably break, and I'll give you each an opportunity if you want to add anything to the record.

To what extent are you satisfied or dissatisfied and what specific recommendation do you have with respect to that with the opportunity you've been given to participate in this process today, by that I mean, the structure by which you've been allowed to provide advice to the Park Service? Again, I want to restrict the comments to the Road, not to the overall Management Plan, but are you generally satisfied? Do you think that we should try to create some sort of a mechanism or formalized mechanism for your participation in this process? That's what I'm looking for.

Mr. RUNNING CRANE. As a member of the Blackfeet Tribe and the council here, we were pretty much, I guess, looking at the economic portion of the construction. Therefore, it would allow us as the Blackfeet people to look at opportunities to where we could provide services to the Park in there on not only the tourism, but also the construction portion of the road, and I think that by being here today it gives us that opportunity to let you people know what we can provide as a council, as a Tribe, and as a people of the Blackfeet Nation to where we could benefit economically in there, and by working together with the Park Service, I think that we could do a lot of good things that would help the tourism and, I guess, would help the people in the construction here.

We look forward to working with the Tribe—I mean, with the Park Service in the things that they are doing here, and, you know, it gives us a good opportunity to express our views here as well. Thank you.

Mr. HILL. You bet. Thank you for being here. Thank you for your valuable input.

Mr. UNTERREINER. We feel like we've had ample opportunity to provide input in the past. I think, going forward, we'd like to—Particularly on the public education kind of marketing, we would like to have some input in that process, particularly in the formation of that plan and how that comes together and what are the alternatives that are presented to visitors. That's one thing we'd like to have input on.

Additionally, going forward, in the area there seems to be kind of a growing consensus, at least among the businesses that have

responded to us, that the best way to go is to do it in the way that has the least impact. Right now that's pointing toward this fast-track alternative.

I think that, in order to even increase the numbers that are there on a final selected alternative, there's going to have to be a lot of communication on the engineering side. Whether that's two separate kind of advisory committees or whether that's something more informal, I don't know.

From my point of view, going forward, on the marketing side and on more details on the engineering side and how that decision that's ultimately arrived at is—how that decision is made, I think it will be important for the business community to be kept informed about how that's happening, and if that's done, I think that there will be a broad consensus over what that alternative is.

Mr. HILL. Thank you, Joe. Thank you for your input as well.

Mr. HALL. I felt today has been very constructive, even for my own information gathering, and I'm most appreciative of it. I'm still not convinced that Alternative A is the best action. The people at this table here could and probably should be on a citizens' advisory board.

In the last issue of FCV News magazine, it came out and stated that the Federal Highway Administration is mandated to involve the public through a citizens' advisory council. However, we understand that the National Park Service does not favor the formation of a council. I'm hoping that after today that maybe something could be done in that effort.

Mr. HILL. Thank you.

Mr. Meznarich.

Mr. MEZNARICH. I think that's an excellent idea as well, a citizens' advisory council. I know I would certainly welcome the opportunity to sit on that. I've been generally satisfied with the opportunity to present information with regard to the highway. It's nice to see a balance here, east side, west side, on this panel, and another example of the east side supporting the west side in this to the benefit of the overall program is the fact that this meeting is on the west side, not on the east side. Nonetheless, we're glad you're here.

Mr. HILL. Well, we only were allowed to schedule one location, and so this was it.

Mr. HUNT. Yes. Thank you.

As a representative of Friends of Glacier, I was invited to participate in the focus meeting on Going-to-the-Sun Road earlier, long before the plan was developed, and I was pleased with the opportunity to present my thoughts and the thoughts that emerged from our group.

I did not get the feeling in that group, though, that we were talking primarily about the reconstruction aspects of the road, but we were talking about how those reconstruction aspects affected the use, which is the critical issue that I believe should be tied more closely to the reconstruction part of it.

So, yes. I'm satisfied that we've had an opportunity to be involved. I do believe, along with other panel members here today, that a citizens' advisory group would be most useful, and there could be many aspects of that going all the way from those who

have engineering and alpine road construction expertise as well as those who might be involved in fostering aspects such as the better use of the Looking Glass or Highway 49, which is one of my favorite views of all of—of looking at the Park is to come back through that way, so that we are not, I don't believe, emphasizing the other aspects of the Park as much as we should in viewing any possibility of closures.

I believe the Park's plan should include elements that talk about all of the—all of the roads that are within the Park's boundaries, and that includes the Inside North Fork Road, so that it is accessible. There should be—In this educational program that's been talked about today, there should be an opportunity somehow to get the information to the visitor to where these other sites are, where they can go to enjoy and experience this wonder of nature. I think that that's where an advisory group would be most helpful.

Now, I know that this is a hearing primarily related to Going-to-the-Sun Road, but I do believe that one of the other critical issues which has been identified, which is the development of the discovery center on the west side, would be an important adjunct to helping bring about this information, this educational program to the Park, use by the visitor in the event that there were any such thing as, the hated word, "Closure" of parts of the Park from one side to the other, and if that were in place before the road construction began, it would be the perfect opportunity to provide the kind of information that would be needed for visitors to really enjoy the Park in all of its other aspects and to enjoy the relationships that the Park has had with the Blackfeet Tribe, with Great Northern Railroad, with the great historic hotels that are so important to the Park's character and culture.

So while I know we're not supposed to talk about all those other things, I don't think we can talk about one thing without thinking about all of the things. So there's a certain gestalt to this plan which needs to be considered, and I believe that a discovery center on the west side would be a very valuable help in making the reconstruction a more painless process than it is going to be otherwise.

Mr. HILL. That's good input. Thank you. Good idea.

Mr. BROOKE. Well, to beat a dead horse, I'm going to beat it some more. Your question was, is there adequate opportunity for public involvement?

On the surface, yes, there's plenty of public meetings, public hearings, those kinds of things, but public involvement necessarily requires that you have all the information in front of you, and that's not there in the EIS. You know, it might be, as you say, more efficient and smarter to do some kind of two-tiered tracking, which I agree with, but we get back to the same question of the chicken and the egg.

I mean, what is the Park Service going to do? We've got this timeframe. You know, public comment closes by the end of November. The Park Service wants to make a decision in January. There's no way you're going to get any kind of intelligent information and new data in terms of outside engineering between now and then. So you've got to modify a time line somewhere along the way here if you keep these tracking together.

Mr. HILL. Obviously, you could—I guess we could talk some more about that later, but the question is—and I'd ask all the panel members—is there anybody on the panel who disagrees with the anticipated outcome that's in the General Management Plan with regard to the Road, that is, that the Road will be reconstructed and will have the features that we talked about? Now, how we get there is another matter, but is there—Do you disagree with that as a goal?

Mr. BROOKE. No. I don't disagree with the way you say it, and if the plan said that, I probably wouldn't be here today, but the plan doesn't say that.

Mr. HILL. I mean, the plan could say that.

Mr. BROOKE. It could say that. That's right.

Mr. HILL. You don't have to choose from the alternatives that are in the plan now. The Park Service could develop another alternative.

Mr. BROOKE. Right. A general alternative.

Mr. HILL. A general alternative with regard to this and complete the EIS and then work on parallel how we're going to get there.

Mr. BROOKE. Exactly.

Mr. HILL. The disagreement seems to be how we're going to get there as opposed to where we want to get.

Mr. BROOKE. It's to choose an alternative, from our standpoint, that may or may not be the right one, and we want to know that when we choose the alternative, whatever that is, it's the best guess as everybody can guess as the right one. We don't know that.

Mr. HILL. Sure. I think we all agree with that. What you're saying, I think, is that we don't have the kind of detail that you think we ought to have and, I think, most people here believe to be able to draw a conclusion necessarily about what the right track is. There might be a third or fourth or fifth track. We don't know that.

I think the superintendent commented earlier—and I was reassured by that—that he's open to other alternatives.

Mr. BROOKE. And I was encouraged by that too, but if you're going to say, We're open to other alternatives. What are they? You know, we don't have the resources to do that. We don't have the expertise. Federal Highways and those kinds of folks do, and the burden really has to shift back, and they've got to go back and do more homework, in our opinion.

Mr. HILL. It seems to me maybe Congress needs to give some direction with respect to that.

Mr. BROOKE. We would welcome that.

Mr. HILL. Thank you all for very valuable input. I've learned a lot from this panel. I appreciate your all being here.

What we're going to do is take about a 15-minute break. During this 15-minute break, those who are here and members of the public that want to make public comment about that, I would ask that you sign up here with Nancy. Only if you sign up will you be permitted to make public comment.

Again, what I'd like to do is try to get you to confine your comments to 2 minutes in a much better fashion than our panelists did confining their comments to five, but if you could, because, obviously, there could be a large number of people that want to make public comment.

What we'll do from this panel is, we're going to ask the superintendent and Ms. Jacoby to come back, and we'll go through some more comment and questions with them, and then we'll open it up for public comment.

With that, we'll take about a 15-minute break.

Thank you very much. It was very informative.

[Brief recess.]

Mr. HILL. If we could ask everyone to take their seats and if I can ask—We need to get our placards up here again. If I could ask our panelists to rejoin us.

I'll remind our panelists we're still under oath, and I thank all of you for staying with us.

I would just—Dave and Carol, I'd just ask you if you have any comments that you want to make in response to the comments that our second panelists had about where we're going here, in whichever order you prefer.

Ms. JACOBY. I guess I just have a general comment to offer about where we are in the engineering that's been done to date.

I made the statement earlier that we worked on the concepts of what would be—Let me back up. We've identified where the needs are on the road as far as the walls, the structural condition of the walls and roadway drainage, things like that. They've been based on visual inventories, but they're pretty detailed and pretty comprehensive for what's out there.

Then we've looked at what concepts are available being used in the industry that could be used in that location to enact the repairs, and the source for that information was the DOT's, not private industry, per se, but it's still a reflection of what's going on.

We also, as the Federal Highway Administration, and specifically Federal Lands, have got extensive experience in the alpine area, at least within the continental U.S., because of where we work. We work in national forests. We work in national parks, and they are the Mt. Rainiers. They are the Beartooth Highways. They are the Glaciers. So that's where we are.

A lot of the time lines and the cost estimates that have been put in there are based on working in the alpine section. They are based on—Or the overriding factor in the scheduling and the time required is the staging that will be implemented. We have anywhere between an 18-foot and a 22-foot template to operate construction equipment, and if it's selected to maintain public traffic, that's not a lot of working room.

So we can do more detailed study. We can include private industry to more extent to discuss these things as we move forward, but I still see that an overriding input in anybody's being able to evaluate what can be done is, we need to know the answer to the question, Are we maintaining public traffic, and in what fashion are we doing that?

Mr. HILL. You can understand, though, the issue—

Ms. JACOBY. Right.

Mr. HILL. [continuing] that's been raised by the people that are going to be directly impacted here, and that is the cart and the horse issue again.

Ms. JACOBY. It is a cart and a horse, and I would say that the Federal Highway and the Park Service are committed to minimiz-

ing the time that's up there because it's just in everybody's best interest to get in and get out of there as fast as we can.

The Federal Highway does use a lot of innovative construction mechanisms, whether it's design build, whether it's lane rental, whatever it is. We make time be a factor rather than just price. We're doing a lot of stuff in the innovative contracting, but, again, that doesn't help you today decide what to do. It's stuff that we can implement as we go into it.

Mr. HILL. But I think there's a general perception—You know, I spent my career, interestingly, before doing this, in the business of bonding construction companies, and I don't pretend to have any kind of expertise associated with, you know, the complex engineering issues here, but I do have considerable experience with what worked and didn't work in the administration of contracts and have found that sometimes I think you can get more done by—with what you refer to as innovative contracting, where you make clear to the construction company, who is actively engaged in making decisions with regard to design matters, the results you want to have.

Obviously, one of those results is what the road is going to look like when it's done, but a significant part of that can be, How do you get there? How do you manage traffic? How soon do you have to get it done? And those kinds of things. But, again, that involves probably making some assumptions early on about how you're going to engineer it.

Ms. JACOBY. Right.

Mr. HILL. Could you answer—and this is an area I'm unclear about. Incidentally, I have here a copy of the needs assessment on the walls, and is there some way you could make that, in some sort of a summary fashion, available to the public so that people—I think there's some view on the part of some that we haven't really identified what the problem is, but I think you have done a pretty good job of identifying what the problem is, specifically to the walls. Is there a way to get that information—

Ms. JACOBY. I can—

Mr. MIHALIC. We can make it—

Ms. JACOBY. Yeah.

Mr. HILL. I don't think everybody wants to read this, but maybe some summary—

Ms. JACOBY. There's an executive summary in there, and maybe the first step would be to pull that executive summary out.

Mr. HILL. You could have that available to the public, if it isn't.

What portion of the cost of this is in the alpine region in your general estimates right now, on the alpine section of the road?

Ms. JACOBY. I'll have to look to the back.

Do we know that, guys?

I may have to get that information from—They're broken down by walls, but I don't know if it's specifically to alpine—

Mr. HILL. The reason I ask the question is, obviously, one of the alternatives is you could use one alternative in the alpine areas and a different way of staging the work in the other areas.

Ms. JACOBY. OK. For the fast-track, Alternative A, in the GMP, the alpine section is almost \$34 million, and the lower section of the road is approaching \$40 million. So it's almost half and half, but not quite.

Mr. HILL. That's significant. I mean, you could use a fast-track mechanism in the alpine area and not use that alternative in the lower area of maintaining traffic?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's just the walls.

Mr. HILL. That's just the walls?

Mr. MIHALIC. Yes, sir.

Ms. JACOBY. No. It's retaining walls, guard walls, drainage.

Mr. HILL. I'd just point out that—I think one of the concerns that folks are having that's been expressed here is the sense that we're faced with two alternatives when, in fact, there could be dozens of alternatives out there, or at least maybe several others, that we haven't examined because we haven't done the engineering yet.

Ms. JACOBY. And I would say—Well, I look at that question at two levels. Is there another alternative that's out there on how to handle the traffic? I don't know that there is, because either you're going to maintain traffic, or you're not going to maintain traffic, or you're going to phase it some way.

Alternative A in my mind is kind of a combination of, you're not going to maintain traffic on certain pieces, so you can expedite construction there, but you're going to maintain tourism access to Logan Pass and work that way.

The more detailed answer that there's been a lot of questions on is whether there's other engineering methods to reconstruct the walls or to reconstruct the roadbed or to meet all these structural needs that the roadway section has, and we have not precluded or written any final statement on what the engineering method is going to be for any one of those reconstruction pieces. What we have looked at is what we think are reasonable methods within the industry right now to come up with the timeframes and to help define what it might mean to the public, but we have not precluded the consideration of anything.

Mr. HILL. The section of road—Part of what drew us to the conclusion we are at now is the sense that the experience in 1995 was so unsatisfactory that we had to come up with something different. Is that a fair characterization?

Ms. JACOBY. I would say that's true.

Mr. HILL. What portion of that work that we did on that occasion involved reconstruction of the retaining walls? Was there a lot of retaining wall construction in that section of road?

Mr. MIHALIC. I think it was—I think actually retaining wall reconstruction on that was very little. The folks behind us might know.

Guard wall. Yeah. It was all guard wall. There was no retaining wall, which would be, actually, below the road surface, and the guard wall was 5 percent, 10 percent at the very most, I would think.

VOICE. To correct you, Dave, we did have the Triple Arches section.

Mr. MIHALIC. That's right. There was a section that was removed from that Oberland Bend section at Triple Arches. That would be an example of the problem that faces us, because with that we had to close it for 5 days—I think it was 5 days, and we actually exposed about a 100 feet long by 40 feet deep section of road, and the only way to do that was literally to close—

Mr. HILL. You don't dare put people over there if you don't think the road is secure.

Mr. MIHALIC. No. But on the other hand, during that particular time, we had traffic up to Logan Pass and up to as far on both sides of that particular section as we could, and we did that in the fall, but that was very instructive of what we were going to face on all these other walls that are of a similar nature.

Ms. JACOBY. If I could add a comment to that, I don't have the information sitting right here, but in doing the work we've done to date with the National Park Service, we've gone through the different elements of the road reconstruction work, and we have made estimates of how many work days would be required for all those different elements, based on our knowledge. That's how we built the timeframes for the Park Service.

What we could do is we can provide that summary—I've got some of it on this sheet, but I could provide that in a summary statement, because, again, we can focus on the walls, but even just glancing down this list, I might say that, easily, there is 80 days required for some wall work, but there's 24 days of pavement construction.

I know if we look at the time line that we developed for the Alternative B where we maintain one lane of road at all times, there's 4 to 5 years of construction time in that scenario just for paving of the road because we physically can't accommodate traffic and have trucks hauling asphalt and operate paving equipment. That's a huge chunk of time, because the only time we can pave is in the month of September and into October.

Mr. HILL. But you can pave at night. I have a lot of experience in the Washington area. They do all their paving at night on all the roads around there.

Ms. JACOBY. And I came from the Washington area, so I'm very versed at what we do there, but it's also a working statement of whether we're hanging on the side of a mountain versus whether we're working on a four-lane parkway at a 55-mile-an-hour design.

You get a different quality of work if you do it at night, and the bottom line, again, is staging when you're working on the side of a mountain. What can you do?

Mr. HILL. I understand that, although you wouldn't have to do paving simultaneous with the building of the wall.

I guess the point I'd just—Let's see if there's some things we can agree on that folks can feel some satisfaction with. Would both of you agree it would be valuable—and the next question is, Is it necessary for Congress to do this?—If we get some outside input here, that we go outside the confines of where we are now and try to get some advice from other areas that may have some experience with this?

Ms. JACOBY. We could include that. If we could have, like, a day workshop or whatever, we can structure something to involve outside industry.

Mr. HILL. I'm not thinking of a day. I'm actually thinking of actually spending some resources to examine whether or not there are alternatives here.

Ms. JACOBY. We can do that. I mean, originally, when you said "A day," we were going to do a show-me tour for private industry

to come in and look at the facility and share information we had, and then they could come back and provide input to us. So, you know, I have to defer to Dave as far as how that would be structured within the Park Service planning process because right now it is a Park Service planning process.

Mr. MIHALIC. Mr. Chairman, I think that, actually, what you're speaking about now is at the cause of a lot of frustration amongst the public. We could do that if we had an authorized road and a repair program for that road. That would, obviously, be the first step would be to get that information, and going out to somebody else other than our partners would certainly be a way to do it. In fact, I think, rather than looking at what they've done in the past as limiting to the question is really an indication of what Federal Highways has tried to do even to this point, and I can't help but think that they would want to get the best solution during the design stage.

I think that the General Management Plan document tries to set all this stuff up to accomplish this. We say that we want an alternative that is the best alternative, and that's what we're trying to do.

One of the earlier witnesses commented that this—that there were ways to accomplish this that were—like were done in an earthquake or somewhere else, and, quite honestly, what we're trying to do in this regard is figure out, How can we solve this without having to have the natural disaster to put the resources to it?

We got to this point through this piecemeal approach of only having a couple of million dollars a year to look at all of this, and every time we would look at one aspect of the Sun Road, we would see all these other problems, and so having a comprehensive study from whatever source, whether it's from within government or from without, to arrive at the best solution I think would go well to allaying our own frustration, and, certainly, if that were to happen, I think the public's frustration would be met as well.

One of the things that I'm really—

Mr. HILL. Can I interrupt you 1 minute?

Mr. MIHALIC. Certainly. Please.

Mr. HILL. Rather than necessarily saying that we authorize the road, we could seek Congressional authorization for the study. Obviously, that anticipates the fact we're going to build a road, but I don't want to withhold moving forward with the engineering study until I get Congress to approve \$100 million authorization for the road. I mean, it would be easier for me to get authorization to proceed with the study in anticipation that we're going to improve the road, you understand, for obvious reasons. So do we kind of have an agreement that that would be a good thing to do?

Mr. MIHALIC. Absolutely. In fact, I think that's, in essence, what the General Management Plan is attempting to do is to get the broad public support necessary to go forward with a road reconstruction program. I think what we heard, at least what I think we've heard this morning, is that there are a lot of questions, and rightfully so, by a lot of different folks on just how we would do that and what the impacts of that would be.

And, unfortunately, the way our system is set up, we can't get into the how we would do that and what the impacts would be to

the depth that everybody would be comfortable in until we can have that broad direction on what we're going to do.

Mr. HILL. OK. So be more specific, then. I'm big on action plans. What do we do from here, and are we in agreement on where we want to go from here? Is it possible—I guess I'd ask you whether you could support this or you think the Park Service could, and if you can't answer it now, I'd like you to answer it later. Can we do this two-track approach? I mean, can we move forward with the inclusion of the General Management Plan, concluding that we're going to reconstruct the road, but leaving open the details in terms of how we're going to accomplish that? Is that a possible alternative? That's possible, now.

Mr. MIHALIC. I'm smiling, Mr. Chairman, only because people are going to be thinking you and I have been talking in the hallway.

If we were to finalize the General Management Plan the way it is now, it puts the administration in the fact of saying—of going forward to the legislative branch and saying, This is what we want to do. We want to reconstruct this road. So that's the first thing.

The second thing is that, any implementation plan to implement the GMP, which the administration would either have to ask for or they'd have to be directed to do to implement the GMP, would go to the level of detail we've all been talking about here. If, in fact—That's why we have in the GMP, as I think it was Mr. Hunt who quoted it, if there's new data, we would get a new alternative. Under the policies of the Park Service for that General Management Plan, it would be to amend it, if amending were necessary.

We've tried to draft the GMP so that we might not even have to amend it, but just to say, OK. We've found a better solution. We've found a new and better way to do this. It still meets the reconstruction focus of the General Management Plan with respect to the road, and that's the way we're going to do it, and I think that could be accomplished.

Mr. HILL. That would be a different alternative, though? It would be different than the choice of alternatives that are there now?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct. Than the choice of alternatives that are there now.

Mr. HILL. I would sure urge you to look at that.

Mr. MIHALIC. And so I think, to be quite honest with you, any implementation plan could really fit very well with this General Management Plan. The General Management Plan even says, if we have to do an additional EIS, we could do that, and it specifically mentions the reconstruction of the Sun Road. The details of that might require an EIS. So we've even tried to build that into the GMP.

Mr. HILL. In the interim, certainly Congress could authorize the engineering study and seek some outside input? I mean, that could be a third parallel track?

Mr. MIHALIC. That would actually be a good bridge to the two processes because we'll never get to the implementation study and the depth of—I think the depth of the questions that were posed here this morning or the—certainly some of the concerns until it's an approved project. Right now it's not even an approved project.

Mr. HILL. You said earlier, I think, that you don't have the authority to go beyond this in terms of the economic analysis?

Mr. MIHALIC. Not really, although we did offer some funding to—Not very much. Just, I think, \$30,000 to the State when they were looking at their particular study, but we don't really have a lot of wherewithal to do anything except for the funding that I think is in the T21 bill for transportation planning.

Mr. HILL. But if Congress was going to do something to authorize some engineering analysis, it could simultaneously authorize some economic analysis?

Mr. MIHALIC. Absolutely.

Mr. HILL. Again, my concern here is to focus on the mitigation aspects of this. I'm not interested in having to go out and compile a whole bunch more data just to have a bunch more data. To me the focus should be, first of all, how do we link the engineering with the economics? Second, let's put the focus on mitigation in terms of the economics. What can we do? So those could be a—occur simultaneously is what we're saying?

Mr. MIHALIC. Absolutely. In fact, I think that would be the type of thing that could certainly speed the existing process as it exists.

Mr. HILL. Since I have you in such a, Yes, mood, let me ask the fourth question, then, and that is, how can we formalize the involvement of citizens in this process?

Mr. MIHALIC. You know, we've really tried to get as much citizen input as we can, and we've done that throughout this process. I think the reflection of citizen input is shown in how the plan has developed over the last 3 years. In fact, as one of the witnesses mentioned, the plan is open to the public right now for public comment, and if the Committee wants, we can include this hearing into that formal process, and we would continue to do that.

I think one of the witnesses mentioned that we had focus groups. We've had open houses. We'll have public hearings this month and next month on this plan, on all different aspects of the plan, and so our concern is that, first of all, any formal advisory group might keep some segments of the public out and that it would be a needless expenditure of additional funding, which we don't have, and might cause us to have to actually take a few steps back and not take advantage of all of the public input that's gone on before.

So from what I'm aware of, a formal advisory committee wouldn't be something that I don't think we—the National Park Service could support, but the fact is that, that's not to mean that we wouldn't work with any advisory group that was formed in any other way, whether it was done by, you know, the chambers of commerce or by the State of Montana, by some outside engineering firm who was actually looking for new engineering.

Mr. HILL. It seems to me, Dave, that there are two things that concern me as we move forward here. We've spent a lot of time talking about the economics here, and to a great extent it's because of the concerns about that that we are here, but the experience that we just had with the campground and the objections that were raised in the environmental community over that would seem to me to tell us that we ought to be talking about, right now, a way for a little more formalized involvement of the conservation community and the business community on the environmental and economic aspects of this so that we don't get down the road and then end up with a class-action lawsuit against us from the business

community or have litigation against us from the conservation community that, you know, delays it 10 years. I mean, you know what could happen.

So I know that the official position of the Park Service at this point is, you don't want a citizens' advisory committee, and I can understand why, because, really, that should have been—If you were going to do it, it would have been formulated during the Scobey process before you got to the point you are right now with the Draft Management Plan.

Is there a way that we can focus on these two aspects of that, that is, citizens' involvement on the environmental and citizens' involvement on the economic mitigation? That's the part that I'm concerned about. How are we going to mitigate the environmental impacts? How are we going to mitigate the economic impacts? To what degree can we get the interested communities involved in those two things in a formalized way?

The reason for that is, it, obviously, causes you to have to listen to them, and it gives them some standing both with you and with the community that their opinions matter. As you know, the public comment process, you know, is not a public opinion process. You don't make the decision on the basis of the weight of the public opinion. It may influence you, but it—I'd like to see a more formalized—I'm not going to pin you down anymore.

Mr. MIHALIC. Obviously, Mr. Chairman, we would work with any group that were formed, whether it was informal or formal. One thing we might be able to do, obviously, if Congress directed us to do so in terms of having, you know, more formalized public input to consider during any kind of planning process or as we do the implementation plans would be to simply have open public forums or have open public meetings.

As you know, and just for the folks so that they'll understand, the National Park Service concern is having a limited group of named individuals to a specific committee which then become powerful in their own right, and that doesn't consider the opinions or the weight of comment from the general public and from all those other people who might not actually have a seat at that table, which is our only concern, I think, to be quite honest with you.

If there is a way for us to do that in some sort of semiformal or less formal manner, I think that that's what we'd prefer. Obviously, if we're directed to do it in a more formal way, I'm sure we would be very responsive.

Mr. HILL. Keep in mind, when you're talking about mitigation, you're pretty focused in terms of what you're trying to do.

Just to put that in perspective, one of the issues that you heard commented here is comments about the road being closed, and we've had conversation before about how sensitive the public is to comments that the road is closed. The Park is closed. If there's going to be an effort—It would be my thought that, if there's going to be an effort to try to mitigate this, it will take a cooperative effort on the part of the communities and the chambers of commerce and the State of Montana and a whole host of different people talking about, How do you communicate to the public in a way that encourages people to still come and see the Park? How do you accom-

modate that within the Park itself and concessionaires within the Park?

I mean, all of that could work to mitigate the impacts of this that has nothing to do with the construction.

Mr. MIHALIC. Absolutely. That's, again, one reason why we'd hate to see the whole General Management Plan held up just by this one thing.

Mr. HILL. I agree.

Mr. MIHALIC. Someone mentioned a visitor center on the west side. That could go to a great extent to help with respect to things in the off-season, the issues of the hotels and the concessionaires. Until we're able to get a building physically able to be used in other than the summer, whether that means winterizing or not, we're not going to be able to use it in those off seasons until we have the infrastructure and the septic systems or sewage systems or water systems winterized in such a manner that we can use those in other than just the summertime.

So there are a lot of things that I think we could do and we'd be very willing to do. As I said earlier, I think that, if we work together to figure out how best to do this, we are very ready to work with everybody involved to do that. Right now it's really the system that prevents us from really tackling this head-on because it's not part of an approved and funded project, and if it's not an approved and funded project, it's very difficult for me to take funds that Congress has directed to me to expend elsewhere and apply them to an unauthorized project.

Mr. HILL. Although you have a lot of flexibility with those fee increases and focus those moneys in a variety of different ways.

Mr. MIHALIC. If—Yes, we do, but only due to the leadership of Chairman Hanson and your Committee.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much.

Ms. Jacoby, do you have any other comments about any of this?

Ms. JACOBY. Just a general statement that we're willing to work with the Park Service. We've done a lot of projects, and I can't say I've been involved in any projects that really had a formal citizens' advisory committee, but I've been involved in a lot of projects that had open communication with the public as we worked through final design, and we had a lot of good information, and we were able to plan when we were going to go to contract and make decisions enough in advance so that the local business community could prepare to the extent they could.

Mr. HILL. OK. Thank you, both. Any other comments you want to make?

Mr. MIHALIC. I might—If I could take just a moment and speak to the Highway 49 issue, if you'd like, there's actually quite a public record on that, and with all due respect to the commissioner from Glacier County, it is Montana Highway 49. It was not constructed by the National Park Service. It was constructed by the Great Northern Railway. It's been an orphan road very much like the Beartooth in a sense.

Mr. HILL. Is it still an orphan road?

Mr. MIHALIC. It is a State of Montana highway. The Park Service maintained it because no one else would, up until the 1940's, when our lawyers told us we had no authority to expend Federal funds,

and we worked out an agreement over time with the State of Montana for them to take it over, which they did.

It took several decades to actually pass that to the State of Montana, and I think that the real solution on Highway 49, if it's the National Park Service that's to expend money on there, is it has to be an authorized part of the National Park System. Right now we simply can't go out and spend that money.

Mr. HILL. You're not soliciting that designation that you're aware of?

Mr. MIHALIC. I don't believe that's within my authority, sir.

Mr. HILL. I know. We addressed that, as you know, with Beartooth, which is truly an orphan road.

Mr. MIHALIC. To be quite honest with you, Highway 49 is in very similar circumstances in that it's on the reservation. It's in Glacier County. It's within the state of Montana, and it's near Glacier National Park, but other than the State of Montana, there's no real clear direction, and, in fact, I think the State of Montana removed it from their list of State highways that were eligible for the State aid program. So it really is out there in—

Mr. HILL. Provide us the history, and then we'll look at—

Mr. MIHALIC. We could provide you with a lot of that history.

Mr. HILL. Is that part of the solution here? Would reconstruction of that road make a difference in terms of—

Mr. MIHALIC. I think it actually would, to be quite honest with you, Mr. Chairman, because it would go far for the focus on the east side in terms of keeping visitors within this part of Montana. I think some of the ideas that the Glacier County commissioner testified to with respect to the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial—it's been interesting. In public meetings over the last few weeks, some folks have suggested that, in fact, the best time to reconstruct the Sun Road would be right in the middle of the Bicentennial rather than avoiding it, but I think that until you start thinking of these sorts of things and trying to think outside the box and looking at all these different parameters, you don't arrive at those different alternatives and those best solutions.

Mr. HILL. Even if it was determined that that was the appropriate thing, there's some pretty serious challenges to get there by then?

Mr. MIHALIC. Absolutely.

Mr. HILL. One last comment I want to just make. I neglected this. I was looking at the summary, of the exit survey summary by Peccia Engineering for the survey, and this is one of the things that kind of alarmed me a little bit, and that is that the general assumption with regard to the economic impacts has been, I think, that it be about a 20-percent reduction in visitorship as a consequence of the reconstruction of the road, and yet, if you look at the Peccia study, Question 8, the question is, If Logan Pass was closed due to road construction, would you still visit the Park?

These are people that came through the Park. Thirty four percent said, No, and almost 4 percent said, Unsure, which is about 38 percent. That's a substantial—I mean, if there's \$100 million impact with 20 percent, it's going to be a lot more than \$100 million impact if it's 40 percent.

That was one of the concerns I have. Even aside from that, even aside from that, I have a real serious question of whether or not surveying 1,000 people exiting the Park is any sort of scientific basis from which to draw that kind of a conclusion anyway.

The real question is that, somebody sitting in Bismarck, North Dakota contemplating where they're going to spend their vacation and they find out that the road is going to be closed, would they still come? I don't know the answer to that, and I don't think this gives us the answer to that.

So if this underlying assumption upon which all the analysis is based is wrong, then, you know, we don't know.

There's another side of this, and that is, the construction is going to bring in employment, and people are going to have to have temporary housing and eat meals. There's that aspect of all this as well that could have an offsetting impact.

I don't know what all that is, and I don't know to what degree it's your responsibility to do that, but I think it is part of—ought to be part of the final decision as to just what those impacts are going to be.

Mr. MIHALIC. I agree with you, and, actually, it's the very next question which says, Question 9, that, If there was roadwork and you could still get to Logan Pass—that's where the 80-percent figure comes from—would you come? Those two questions had great impact in why we structured some of the staging that Ms. Jacoby spoke about, part of the road on one side having construction, part of the road on the other side having construction, but always maintaining traffic to Logan Pass, particularly because of those two questions.

So I agree with you very much that these studies have tremendous impact, and it behooves us to ensure that they're as accurate as possible.

At a chamber of commerce luncheon the other day, Dr. Nickerson from the State of Montana—University of Montana Tourism Institute was asked the question about how confident was she in just surveying 1,000 people, and she seemed to feel that you could survey 10,000 people, and it really wouldn't change it all that much.

I think the biggest thing is, if we're going to put as much concert or—as much into questions such as those two questions, it behooves us to have the best data we can, and if that—If the questions are so important that we should go do it again with further study as we go into the implementation phase, I'd say that that's exactly what we should do.

Mr. HILL. My current profession does cause us to have an interest in polls sometimes, and I would just comment that, you know, her statement is both accurate and inaccurate. If you were to poll 10,000 people in the same circumstance, you'd probably get a similar result as polling 1,000. The question is, Did you poll the right people in the right circumstance?

Mr. MIHALIC. That's true.

Mr. HILL. Since we're referring to additional questions, then I'll refer you to Question 10, which says, If road construction prevented direct access to Logan Pass, would you take a 2-hour detour around the southern boundary of the Park to visit the other side

of the Park? Thirty six percent said, No, and almost 5 percent said, Not sure.

Mr. MIHALIC. That's correct.

Mr. HILL. About 60 percent of the people who were surveyed exited on the west side of the Park. I don't know where they entered, but I guess the concern that I would have is that, all those point to a likely, more substantial impact than the impact that was used for the assumptions, and I don't know whether it's good or not good.

Mr. MIHALIC. No.

Mr. HILL. That's why I just think we need to spend more time on it.

Mr. MIHALIC. I agree.

Mr. HILL. With that, I want to thank you very, very much. Going to open this up for some public comment. I think we have seven people. I urge you to stay and listen to the other comments. Thank you very much. This has been a valuable meeting. Thank you.

Mr. MIHALIC. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HILL. We have a microphone back here for people who want to make public comment. Our first person is George Darrow from Bigfork.

George, again, I would urge you, if at all possible, to try to confine your comments to about 2 minutes. If you want to enter written comments to the record now or later, the record will be open for 10 days.

Mr. DARROW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. HILL. And we're going to use the lights. The green light is you can speak, and when it goes to yellow, you've got 30 seconds left, and when it goes to red, you're supposed to be done, but you can tell nobody else is paying any attention to that. Go ahead.

STATEMENT OF GEORGE DARROW

Mr. DARROW. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My name is George Darrow. I'm a businessman in Bigfork, which is some 45 minutes to an hour away from the west entrance of Glacier Park, and I'm conversant with the tourism business in the area, and I understand that Glacier Park is the core magnet for visitation in northwest Montana and that the Going-to-the-Sun Highway is the very heart of that, but, certainly, it isn't the only attraction that is here to enhance vacation experiences for visitors.

I want to applaud your efforts in championing this effort to bring it to the attention of your colleagues in Congress and to focus public attention on it generally, but Glacier is actually the core attraction of a very large reaction complex that straddles the Continental Divide and runs from northern Montana up into Alberta.

And among the opportunities for mitigating construction going beyond the corridor, a couple have already been mentioned. One would be the visitor center at the Apgar junction there, and that would certainly offer an opportunity that would be comparable to the St. Mary visitor's center for people approaching from the west.

The other option is to call attention to the attractions that are available on U.S. 2, and rather than calling it a detour, it is a scenic highway. It is not available to the management of Glacier Park, but it is an option if Congress could somehow bring about the co-

ordinated effort between the Forest Service and the Park. That highway has—if it were anyplace else than northwest Montana, would be a national scenic Parkway, and it has history of Lewis and Clark. It has the history of the discovery of Marias Pass. It has the history of the construction of the Great Northern Railroad. It is, also, the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial Highway.

The road itself has ample turnouts. If it had some interpretation, if it had some marketing, if it had the approval of Congress, the authorization for cooperation between the Park and the Forest Service, I think that could go a long way to maintain the visitor experience in this area and help to mitigate the problems that we're concerned with.

Thank you.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much, George.

Is it Rahn Armbruster? Is Rahn correct?

Mr. ARMBRUSTER. Rahn is correct.

STATEMENT OF RAHN ARMBRUSTER

Mr. ARMBRUSTER. My name is Rahn Armbruster. I'm a conceptual designer, and I reside in Cut Bank, Montana.

I come here today to ask that a different route be considered as a solution to the reconstruction of Going-to-the-Sun Highway. The reason why I ask this request is from observations which I have made.

At a meeting hosted by Glacier Park, Incorporated, a Park administrator explained the National Park Service's responsibility concerning Going-to-the-Sun Highway is to preserve the experience. He further explained that each of us has the right to the same experience that our parents had and that our grandparents had as well. He also shared his frustration in the process of bringing necessary change to the Park.

Can I ask what the foundation is that has provided the criteria for the design of the reconstruction of the Going-to-the-Sun Highway? Is it preservation guided by tradition? Can I ask you what affect preservation has on an environment that is under constant change, constant evolution? And what role have we taken in preserving the very namesake of this Park? Perhaps preservation is not our purpose.

Have we confused preservation with protection? And what affect does tradition have on the nature of the Park? How does a traditional boundary between two countries who have never been at war affect this Park? Would criteria from the very source of why this Park was created provide true guidance for this highway's reconstruction?

I believe that in returning to its origin we will find the common thread which has brought us here together today, and in returning to the origin of the National Park System, I believe we will return to the very origin of our nation, not its Constitution, but its Declaration of Independence.

Is observation of nature the cohesive simplicity that is the common ground that connects all peoples of that nation? And through following their hearts and giving themselves what they truly needed, our forefathers gave themselves the freedom necessary for their own evolution.

Does observation of nature lie at the very heart of why this road was originally constructed? Would observation of nature guided by the heart provide truer criteria for the reconstruction of this highway? Through allowing our heart to guide us, will the need for protecting this Park and its inhabitants diminish with time?

To the east of Glacier Park lies the sculpture studio of Bob Scriver, and through observation you will note the evolution of his work over time, his early works being that of taxidermy, evolving as Bob followed his heart to sculpture, where he captures the beauty and spirit of the animal without destroying it.

I believe something very special occurs when we allow ourselves to be guided by our heart. We open our minds, possibilities which are firmly rooted in love and understanding and respect, and love never makes anything less or leaves anything the same. Love always makes more through its actions.

I believe it is our mind which allows us to see only the probabilities, and what difference would there be in the reconstruction of this highway if observation of nature guided by the heart were the criteria for its design? Would our heart illuminate possible solutions for its reconstruction that our mind cannot see, that would allow for continual flow of observers over this mountain, giving us something we truly need?

Can the heart guide us to a solution that would truly reflect the beauty of Glacier, of nature itself and the beauty of us as humans? Can our heart guide us to the design that would allow a mountain to be a mountain where she needs to be, and isn't this what our National Park System is all about, allowing nature to be itself?

Could a road be designed so that it, too, reflects who we are as humans? Through observation of our nature, are we not both a physical being and a spiritual being? And is our spirituality somehow connected to the depths of our observations?

Mr. HILL. Mr. Armbruster, could you conclude this? Certainly, we'll take that for the full record, but we've got about three times the allowed limit, and everyone will want to do that.

Mr. ARMBRUSTER. Should I quit now?

Mr. HILL. If you want to just—

Mr. ARMBRUSTER. I've got a couple paragraphs left.

Mr. HILL. All right. Go ahead.

Mr. ARMBRUSTER. And what could be learned through the depth and observation of nature of such a road? If we could see the beauty in a road which allows a mountain to be a mountain, could a nation also see the beauty in allowing its peoples the freedom to be human? Could a nation also see the beauty and returning to its source for guidance into the future?

What risk do we take in returning to our origin to seek guidance for our future? Do we fear that we won't find truth in our very foundation?

I believe that when we allow an open mind to guide us back to our source we will make the return without judgment, and in doing so we will see the beauty and love of which our foundation is made. We will find our heart. We will discover the cohesive simplicity which connects us all together on earth, and somehow, when we return to our heart, our origin with an open mind, something very wonderful happens. We open a door, and as the lyric in the love

scene from the motion picture Titanic states, Once more we open the door, and the heart goes on.

Thank you for your time.

Mr. HILL. Thank you. Thank you for being here.

Roscoe Black. I urge you to try to stay close to 2 minutes, please.

STATEMENT OF ROSCOE BLACK

Mr. BLACK. You mean I just can't carry on and carry on?

I'm Roscoe Black, owner of St. Mary Lodge on the east entrance to Glacier National Park where Going-to-the-Sun Highway meets Highway 89. Of course, we're going to be one of the most heavily impacted businesses if and when this reconstruction of Going-to-the-Sun Highway occurs.

Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank you very much for taking the lead in this important issue, and most of the items that I was going to talk about have been thrashed and rethrashed and brought to the forefront.

I think that, from my personal aspect, basically, what I was looking for from this meeting was to have the aspect on reconstruction of Going-to-the-Sun Highway be a broad brush statement saying, Reconstruction of Going-to-the-Sun Highway will occur within this Management Plan, but the specifics on how it is to be done and where and how the funding, et cetera, will happen will come after additional studies have been done, and I think that Mr. Mihalic virtually agreed that that's the direction that we're going to be heading, kind of a double track here, and that we are not going to be confined to the time line of the Management Plan to make a decision on whether or not we're going to close this thing for 6 years or we're going to have continuous traffic or what are going to be the eventual determinations.

If we can take that out of the time line, I think a great number of the people who are very concerned about this issue can breathe a lot easier, because we're not going to have to, within a 90-day period, determine the longevity of our businesses.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much, Mr. Black. I think that that's what we have agreement on or at least are moving toward.

Our next spokesman will be Bob Retz.

STATEMENT OF BOB RETZ

Mr. RETZ. Thank you, Congressman Hill.

My name is Bob Retz, and my wife and I own the North Forty Resort in Whitefish, and I'm also in the securities business and have been for most of my working life. I'd like to say, since this problem with the road closure surfaced 6 months ago or whatever—it's been close to the recent volatility of the stock market—I feel like I'm on the endangered species list that we've been talking about here all afternoon.

I'd like to make a few brief comments about the perspective of a small businessman running a resort in Whitefish. For those that don't know, we have 22 log cabins, and I would say 70 percent of our business comes during June, July, August and September, and by far most of our guests are out-of-state guests. Even though, if they stay for a week, they may only go up to the Park one of the days and do everything else that the Flathead Valley has to offer

during the remainder of their stay, without question the Park is the draw that brings them into the state of Montana. At least, you know, that is our experience.

And already there has been—We have been receiving calls where people just hear a bit of information about, you know, Is the Park open? I hear it's going to close. Last year, when we had a late opening because of the heavy snows, we also received a lot of those calls, people that had heard and wanted to cancel their reservations.

I mean, this is a very important problem, and I think the analogy of an earthquake is very valid. You know, in this case we know the earthquake is perhaps 4 years away, but it's still coming, and everybody says, You've got a lot of time to prepare for it. You hit the nail on the head. How do you prepare for it?

One of things I've been thinking about since the long bond hit 507 this morning of trying to refinance my debt, the problem is, How do you go to a financial institution with any kind of economic projection that would make them comfortable to want to refinance debt when you don't know how to make those projections and the future is so uncertain?

So the thrust of my comment is, what we talked about here very briefly earlier, if there's any kind of Federal loan money that could be made available to people that could refinance, or even some low interest rate, short-term transition money that would help people through the 2 or 3 years that their side of the Park is going to be closed.

Thank you.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much, Bob.

Onno Wieringa. Did I pronounce that right?

Mr. WIERINGA. That's pretty good.

Mr. HILL. Thank you.

STATEMENT OF ONNO WIERINGA

Mr. WIERINGA. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Onno Wieringa from Glacier Raft Company in West Glacier, Montana.

This has been a great process. I applaud you for your efforts. When I read the EIS, I was confused. I was trying to decide what it was trying to do, and Superintendent Mihalic this morning said, We've determined that the essence of the road is going to remain the same; i.e., there's no tramways. We're going to maintain it as a roadway for vehicles, doing about what they're doing now.

I thought that was adequate for what the General Management Plan should be trying to do. That's a big deal, to not decide that they were going to turn it in to any number of different things with it. That's kind of the scope of how a lot of other things in the Park—in the plan came across.

Then, maybe additionally, it should say, And we've determined that there's some real problems with the road, and it's going to need some major reconstruction and some serious maintenance soon, and here is some of the mitigating measures that we think need to happen that go along with those, and somebody better get busy and start studying how to get that done and leave it at about that.

You know, as Dave—As Will pointed out, it went beyond that in deciding when it was going to be closed and for how long without having the stuff to back it up.

I think it's all good. It just went too far for what the General Management Plan needed to do.

Mr. HILL. Thank you. Thank you very much.

We'll try one more time with a name. Betty Rudisill. She had to leave, I guess.

John—Is it Helton or Melton?

Mr. HELTON. Helton.

Mr. HILL. Helton. It's hard enough to pronounce them when they're printed clearly, John.

STATEMENT OF JOHN HELTON

Mr. HELTON. Good afternoon. My name is John Helton. I'm the manager of Alpine Homestead outside of Martin City. We have a small ranch, and we have four guest cabins that we rent out. I21With my position I have the privilege and am lucky to get up on the road quite a bit with guests and friends, and I just would like to stress that the road is in bad shape. It's sloughing off. You can see the asphalt going sideways in places. It does need to be closed.

Having looked at the EIS a little bit and just looking at the economics of how it's going to effect the road closures, as a corporation, we support the closing of each side of the pass or one side and then the other in keeping Logan Pass open. I think that would probably have the least amount of impact for businesses by having to keep the pass open, but also, as Mayor Hall earlier pointed out, there's other roads that do need to be improved, the Looking Glass Road and even the road to the North Fork. The one border crossing there with Canada is closed right now, and that could be reopened as well, even just temporarily.

Again, I think the roadway does need to be fixed up, and sooner rather than later. Mother Nature is going to take care of the problem for us. There's been talk about lawsuits, the idea that, you know, businesses are going to have lawsuits. I imagine the lawsuits will be generated by folks that are be driving the roadway when the roadway falls off. I would say we need get going on this sooner than later.

Thank you.

Mr. HILL. Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Mr. Helton may be found at end of hearing.]

That concludes the hearing. I want to, again, thank all the panelists for their participation and their involvement. I think this has been very constructive for me. I think we're leaving here with some action agenda that we need to go to work on. I thank the public for its participation, and with that, this will close the hearing of the Parks and Public Lands Subcommittee of the Resources Committee.

[Whereupon, the Subcommittee was adjourned.]

[Additional material submitted for the record follows.]

STATEMENT OF DAVID MIHALIC, SUPERINTENDENT, GLACIER NATIONAL PARK,
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Mr. Chairman, members of the Subcommittee, it is my pleasure to welcome you to Kalispell, gateway to Glacier National Park. Thank you for the opportunity to address the subject of maintenance and repairs to the Going-to-the-Sun Road. We applaud your interest in seeking ways to maintain the values preserved by our national parks, which are so important to all Americans and also critical to local communities near the parks.

Glacier National Park covers just over 1 million acres in northwestern Montana. Approximately 2 million visitors a year come to Glacier, the majority in June through August. Conservative economic models indicate that use of Glacier National Park generates about \$160 million a year to the state of Montana and provides some 2,400 jobs.

A general management plan guides the administration of each unit of the National Park System. Glacier's last master plan was completed in 1977. A draft general management plan is now before the public for review. Our first public "scoping meetings" were held in the spring of 1995. Since then we have had a number of opportunities to listen to the public, those both near and far, so we can incorporate their comments into our planning.

One of the most controversial issues is how to rehabilitate the world famous Going-to-the-Sun Road. This national landmark has been widely recognized as perhaps the most scenic road in North America. Its development in the 1920's and 1930's made possible experience of the park enjoyed by most visitors since then. Previously, the magnificent scenery of Glacier was only seen by those who could afford the time and expense of rail travel and weeks on horseback.

Horse-drawn scrapers and steam shovels were used to build the Going-to-the-Sun Road. It was carved out of the side of the Garden Wall by dynamite, pry bars, and sweat. The route, which was chosen by the Director of the National Park Service, had only one switchback—the Loop—in order to maximize the scenic views from the road. For most people visiting the park, driving the road is the focal point of their visit.

The deterioration of the Sun Road was recognized by the Service over a decade ago. With the passage of the Intermodal Surface Transportation and Efficiency Act, funds were made available to the National Park Service for park road construction across the nation. Glacier and the needs of the Sun Road competed with other national park needs across the country. Work was done by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) along Lake McDonald and the St. Mary sections beginning in 1989. Today we are continuing work on the western side of the Continental Divide in the vicinity of Avalanche. The only work scheduled in the next few years is on some of the most critical repair needs on the retaining walls in the alpine section of the Sun Road and a slumping section of the Many Glacier Road. These sites are sections of the road where it is easier to maintain visitor traffic during construction, even though delays still result. There is no approved program allocation beyond the year 2000.

The Park Service knows that we have to tackle the substantial backlog of the critical needs in the high, alpine zone of the park road. This zone has a very short working season and presents many construction challenges. It is not easy—and it is expensive—to rebuild a road so that it will remain safe and serviceable in the face of traffic and environmental stresses on the highest stretches, especially, of this road.

In 1995 and 1996 we worked on less than a half-mile of road in the Logan Pass area. For those who remember, it was a nightmare, both for the contractor and the public. Some of the delays seemed interminable. We tried many things and learned a tremendous amount from that experience. For example, we tried night work, lane closures, and scheduling major work in the fall—all the steps that quickly come to mind. Mostly we learned that working on this high, narrow, carved-from-a-cliff national landmark cannot be done without conflicts and impacts when the construction season and the visitor season are almost one and the same. We learned that actual construction times could triple the times in our original schedule. We have had to reevaluate how quickly we could rebuild sections of the road that we expected to rebuild in two years.

As a result, the Service and the FHWA put our most experienced engineers and transportation planners to work on how best to continue to repair the road and minimize the impact to visitors. We are using the general management plan process to seek public input. We quickly learned three things. First, doing the work conventionally with the funding we could normally expect from the Park Roads and Parkways Program would take decades to complete. Second, being able to maintain traf-

fic flow—which really means insuring visitors to Glacier would be able to continue to traverse the park—is a tremendous complicating factor. Finally, the costs of different alternatives vary radically, from approximately \$70 million to \$210 million.

We have been very concerned since the beginning about the potential for tremendous economic impact. We know that the road work might impact the whole state, especially as Montana prepares for the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial. We also know that are different economic interests at stake, whether one is located east of the Divide or in the Flathead, is in a retail or service industry, or in a gateway community or visiting Glacier.

The National Park Service arranged for studies of the economic impacts on local Glacier dependent businesses and the broader travel industry. Those studies indicated that the economic pain only gets worse the longer the work drags on. Since then, the University of Montana has conducted independent studies arriving at similar conclusions.

To quote our draft general management plan, the National Park Service prefers an alternative that preserves the historic character of the road, completes the repairs before the road fails, minimizes impacts on natural resources, visitors and the local economy, and minimizes costs. Based on the best available information, Alternative A [fast-track reconstruction of 4-6 years] “appears to best satisfy those criteria.” (GMP Overview, p.49 1998.)

Mr. Chairman, I wish I could sit before you today and tell you we have a plan, and the money to carry it out—to rebuild the road without disrupting anything. But I cannot. The National Park Service does not have the fiscal resources that come anywhere near matching the road needs of our national parks. For every tax dollar spent in Glacier on the Going-to-the-Sun Road there are three dollars of need in other national parks that will go unmet.

For me to be fiscally responsible, I must recommend the alternative that best expends our nation’s public funds in a manner that is in the best interests of all citizens in keeping with the National Park Service mission. We have proposed what we believe to be the best solution given the parameters and knowledge we have to date. Believe me, if there is a better solution, I will be the first to embrace it! We do not want to see the road closed from the public any more than absolutely necessary. But we also do not want to see some catastrophic road failure cause a total road closure that could have even greater economic consequences.

I also pledge to you that we see this as an opportunity to work closely with the surrounding communities and the state of Montana. During the time we are developing detailed design plans for the reconstruction, we will work with the communities and the state to mitigate as much as possible the effects on the local and state economies during the period that the road is under construction. In fact, I hope we can use the challenge we all face with the road construction to forge the most successful cooperation yet among the park, the state and the affected communities, to better serve our visitors.

Mr. Chairman, thank you for your leadership in bringing these issues to the forefront. Glacier National Park is one of world’s treasures. The Going-to-the-Sun Road is perhaps the most spectacular roadway in the national park system. Our agency’s mission is to preserve these treasures for future generations and also use them for the benefit of the present. We embrace that challenge and realize our obligation to also seek solutions that are the best for all and serves our public trust. I assure you that is our goal.

That concludes my formal remarks, Mr. Chairman. I would be happy to respond to any questions that you may have.

STATEMENT OF CAROL H. JACOBY, DIVISION ENGINEER FOR WESTERN FEDERAL LANDS, HIGHWAY DIVISION, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

I am Carol Jacoby, Division Engineer, Western Federal Lands Highway Division (WFLHD), Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), Vancouver, Washington. I would like to thank you for the opportunity to testify before this field hearing on issues related to the future maintenance and repair of the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park, Montana.

The National Park Service (NPS) is the Federal Agency with oversight and management responsibilities for Glacier National Park. The NPS is in the process of updating its General Management Plan which includes strategies to improve the condition of the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

The WFLHD has been assisting the NPS in assessing roadway and transportation needs at Glacier National Park. The FHWA’s assistance has been at the request of

the NPS, and is not an independent initiative. This assistance is being provided in accordance with the 1983 Interagency Agreement between the NPS and FHWA.

The WFLHD's assistance began in 1984 with a study to rehabilitate the Going-to-the-Sun Road. This study identified the condition and operational characteristics of the roads in Glacier National Park as well as reconstruction and improvement alternatives for the continued safe use of these Park roads. The WFLHD has updated the findings in the 1984 study and has conducted other studies to assist the Park in identifying alternatives to expedite rehabilitating the Going-to-the-Sun Road which will minimize disruption to the traveling public visiting the Park.

Since the 1980s, improvements have been initiated on this historic Park road. The work within Glacier National Park has been challenging due to difficult terrain; the importance of preserving park values, which impact how and when the reconstruction projects occur; and the need to accommodate the traveling public while performing work.

In summary, the WFLHD is committed to assisting the NPS in developing and refining alternatives in the General Management Plan to expedite rehabilitating Going-to-the-Sun Road and simultaneously minimize impacts on the traveling public visiting the Park and adjacent edge communities. We appreciate the opportunity to provide comments at this important field hearing.

LETTER FROM HON. CONRAD BURNS, A SENATOR IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF MONTANA TO HON. RICK HILL

UNITED STATES SENATE,
WASHINGTON, DC,
September 21, 1998.

The Hon. RICK HILL,
1037 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC.

Congressman Hill:

I want to congratulate you for your attention to Glacier National Park and the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

It seems there are few easy answers to the infrastructure needs at Glacier. Whatever course we take with the Going-to-the-Sun Road—whether it be shorter-term action, longer-term action or even inaction—it will have great implications for the park and for the families and communities that depend upon the park for their survival. That's why it is extremely vital that we have all of the information and opportunities for public input that we can afford.

Glacier National Park is truly one of our national treasures. We must do everything in our power, in accordance with our stewardship of the Park System, to preserve it and also to help provide for the demands of continued visitation. In light of this, today's hearing is an important one, and you are to be applauded for your efforts.

Sincerely,

HON. CONRAD BURNS,
United States Senator.

STATEMENT OF GARY D. HALL, MAYOR AND OWNER, COLUMBIA FALLS, PARK VIEW INN BED & BREAKFAST

I begin this five minute dissertation by thanking Representative Hill for his leadership and concern for this most important event in Montana's history. On behalf of small businesses of the Flathead Valley we truly thank you. We, as you know are a minority and it is real mce to know that we are being considered and given a voice at this most crucial time.

I don't believe that GNP is out to hurt small business but I do believe there are some inequities in alternative A, road closures. I applaud the efforts put forth by GNP by the reports put forth and the willingness to listen to the community So I would ask that you listen real carefully today to all that is brought before you.

The Federal Highway Administration proposed a 15 year reconstruction plan with partial closures and several untried measures to allow visitor use and GNP did not offer this to us, why. At Representative Hill's last meeting in Kalispell a man from the Dept. of Transportation told us how rock walls can be built on the vally floor and be lifted in place which can save many days and many dollars.

Another concern is that there has not been a formal engineering study on the road and that should be a concern for all of us, we must know all the facts before pushing hundreds of businesses to extinction.

We have made everyone aware that up to this point there is not a citizens advisory board in place and we must insist on having that in place before we move any further.

The economic study that was done at the University of Montana was good but one of my concerns is the talk of promoting people to come and plan their vacation around observing the construction. No matter how you look at it or present it, it's a bad deal. I know that if I am going to spend an average of \$206 per person per day in the park, why in the world would I want to spend it doing that. It would be a marketing miracle to pull that one off and one we shouldn't risk. People who don't own a business, or whose hopes and dreams aren't hinging on whether the road closes or not will get their say today, and tomorrow, but please, hear our cry and don't shut us out.

I also believe that the public deserves a full and separate environmental and economic review of the options. Also it seems that we may be putting the cart before the horse. We are beginning this process without committed funding. Are we going to close the park for reconstruction and then try to get the funding, I would sincerely hope not.

There has been talk of the importance of communication and marketing. GNP needs to communicate to people now and forever that Logan Pass is and will always be open, no matter what the scenario we come to. Once again we must take the word closure out of our vocabulary, literally. Also by the information given to the media and the press to this point about the road being shut down for reconstruction we have had a minimum decline in tourism to the state of 20 percent. We cannot expect the general public to understand all that is going on at this end.

I also find it disturbing that the road reconstruction plans ended up in the general management plan in March. I would ask that it be removed. NEPA (National Environmental Policy Act) demands that any major construction of this nature must have its own EIS (Environmental Impact Statement). The construction of Going to the Sun should be removed from the General Management Plan.

No one has mentioned the fact that the accommodations tax that is collected will not be there if we lose the anticipated \$65 to \$125 million that would be lost if we were to follow through with alternative A, 2 year *closure* on each side.

In closing I offer these personal views. 1. Do not settle for anything being done unless one lane of the road be left open. If a tunnel has to be fixed then at that time let tourists know the way to access Logan Pass is to go around to the other side but don't advertise the C word. 2. Do everything possible to keep the \$160 million income and 2400 jobs going strong. 3. A suggestion by a local business directly effected by the proposal is to extend the Many Glacier Road to the North Fork Road, which would create a loop. This would allow repair to the road to happen at any time, even emergency closures by accidents, rock slides etc. It would also make opportunity for campsites off the North Fork Road from Cames Creek to Columbia Falls thus taking pressure off the park. 4. Lastly, and I hate to end on this note but to let you know how serious local businesses are to being sure that they are protected, there is in place \$6000 from only 2 businesses so far that will be applied to a class action lawsuit if necessary to protect our businesses and our futures.

Again thank you very very much for allowing me to express these grave concerns as an elected official along with the views of other local business people directly affected by the road closure proposal. Respectfully submitted.

STATEMENT OF LOWELL W. MEZNARICH, GLACIER COUNTY COMMISSIONER,
REPRESENTING GLACIER COUNTY, MONTANA

Representative Hansen and honorable members of the Subcommittee.

My name is Lowell Meznarich and I am an elected commissioner representing Glacier County. All of Glacier National Park which is east of the continental divide is in my county. Given that fact, all issues which affect Glacier National Park are important to Glacier County. My fellow commissioners and I have cautiously monitored the discussions regarding the future maintenance and repair of the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier National Park. Simultaneously, we have questioned our local population to obtain their input on the matter at hand. I am pleased to have this opportunity to offer our collective thoughts.

No local issue in the past five years has seen greater scrutiny than the options given to repair the Going-to-the-Sun Road. All of the options will be harmful to the tourism industry in Northwestern Montana. There is a solution however. One of the

options coupled with several other enhancements has the potential to get the work done effectively while also providing a unique opportunity to assist the East side of the Park in reducing its tourism loss. I am strongly in favor of closing one side of the Road at a time, leaving the other open up to the Visitors' Center at Logan Pass and reducing the impact on the economy by taking advantage of a upcoming significant event.

Item Number 1 The closure of the East side of the Road should coincide with the observance of the Bicentennial of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The large increase in visitors for the bicentennial will help a great deal with the expected reduction in visitors to Glacier National Park because of the road work and closure. Planning to have these two events at the same time will be a tremendous benefit to Glacier County. The years 2004 through 2006 would be ideal for the East side closure. This is important since within 25 miles of Cut Bank, the Glacier County seat, are two of the most significant sites along the Lewis and Clark trail.

The first, Camp Disappointment is where Meriweather Lewis with three of his party discovered that the Missouri River drainage did not cover as much territory to the north as originally hoped. The dreary overcast day not only added to their disappointment, it also obscured the Rocky Mountains which were just to the west.

Had the day been clear, Lewis would have plainly seen the opening to Marias Pass, the lowest elevation pass through the Rocky Mountains. Lewis was within easy sight of one of his most significant potential discoveries, but he would never know. The possibilities of that missed discovery have been romanticized for years.

The Fight Site is the location of the following days camp. At this site, Lewis encountered and camped with a group of Blackfeet Indians. The following morning was the only armed conflict of the entire expedition. The fight over horses and weapons resulted in the death of two of the Blackfeet party and a close call for Lewis who wrote, "Being bareheaded at the time, I plainly felt the ball pass over my head." This encounter took place near the banks of the Two Medicine River in an area which historians consider the most primitive and least changed in the nearly two hundred years since the explorers journey. Use of this site will also provide an additional introduction to the Blackfeet Indian culture which is another of the great treasures of our region.

The residents of Glacier County are quickly learning that the upcoming Bicentennial is gaining national and international attention. Already, Glacier County residents have taken the first few sparks of interest, added their entrepreneurial spirit and developed creative business ventures to cash in on the expected rush of adventuresome tourists. With the expected increase in visitors to our area, I believe we can significantly reduce the negative economic impact of the closure of the East side of the Road. A carefully crafted promotion would be very beneficial to Glacier County.

Item Number 2 Regarding the Lewis and Clark trail sites, we need assistance to improve access opportunities to the sites themselves. Traveling to each site presently requires driving on undeveloped roads followed by a walk of up to one mile. The roads are one lane only and are often not more than a slightly worn path through the natural grass. The walk is over easy terrain, but the path is not clearly visible in many areas. Any improvements should maintain the present condition of the sites and not detract from the natural state each site presently enjoys. As such, many portions of the road and trail will merely need simple markings to keep the traveler on the proper path. Other areas may need compaction work and/or a light gravel application. Much like work in Glacier National Park, any improvements to these sites must preserve and protect the area. Little has changed since Lewis appeared at these sites. We need to keep it that way since that is precisely why these sites appeal to a significant number of Americans. These improvements could be accomplished with a very small amount of funding.

Both sites are located on and accessible only through private land. I believe we must immediately pursue public acquisition of the sites and access. If that is not possible, in the least we must have agreements in place which allow for public maintenance and access when appropriate.

While access is important, the American people in general and the local residents in particular will want to also limit access to the sites. This is necessary to protect the visitor from hazardous driving and walking conditions caused by weather or darkness. It is also important in protecting the sites themselves and to protect the road and walking trail from damage. It is also important to control the number of vehicles and visitors on the road and walking path at any time. The areas are generally fragile terrain, so control is absolutely necessary.

Item Number 3 Glacier National Park must do everything in its power to trumpet what is available to the visitor and to downplay the Going-to-the-Sun Road closure. We don't need the headline to scream that the Road is closed. Instead, leading

up to and during the East side closure, national and international promotions should extol the uncommon beauty of our many East side areas like Two Medicine, St. Marys, Many Glaciers and even Canada's Waterton National Park. Promoting jointly with Waterton should become a priority. The opportunities to experience the Lewis and Clark sites should also be a significant part of this promotion.

Item Number 4 Get the job done! The recent Logan Pass area improvement project is exactly what we don't want. That project took too much time, went significantly beyond its expected time line and greatly frustrated the Park visitors. The projected time lines for the Going-to-the-Sun Road are already dangerously long when considering the economic health of the local business people who rely on tourism for their livelihood and also for the people who rely on those businesses for employment. The construction contracts should place significant demands for timely completion including, as appropriate, stiff monetary penalties if the work is unduly prolonged.

Item Number 5 Glacier National Park must accept primary responsibility for repair and maintenance of Highway 49 which is known as the Looking Glass Road. This road is the north south link between East Glacier Park, Two Medicine and St. Marys. The road was originally constructed by the National Park Service and for years was maintained by them. Since it is outside the park boundary, the Park Service has chosen to allow the road to deteriorate. At present, the Looking Glass Road is generally open on the same calendar used by Glacier National Park. The road is not maintained during the winter. Like Going-to-the-Sun Road, the Looking Glass offers a unique view of Glacier National Park, which is just to the west of the road. The road itself winds along the slopes of the mountainous terrain and is extremely popular with our local out door enthusiasts. Traveling the Looking Glass Road greatly shortens the distance around the southern border of Glacier National Park when traveling from St. Marys to West Glacier. It will clearly become the route of choice for the visitors who want to see both the East and West side of the Park during the road repair closures.

In summary, I support the closure of one side of the road at a time with several enhancements: the East side closure occurs within the years 2004 to 2006 to coincide with the greatest interest in the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial; access and control to the Lewis and Clark sites are improved; the Park Service promotes what there is to offer, downplaying the road closure; the job gets done in a timely manner; and the Park Service maintains the Looking Glass Road. With these five easily attainable enhancements, I am confident the Park Service will find general support for the road repair project.

FOLLOW-UP ADDRESS:

TOPICAL OUTLINE:

Suggested solution—Close half of the Going-to-the-Sun Road at a time and reduce the economic impact through several means.

1. Time the East side closure with the observance of the Lewis and Clark Expedition Bicentennial years 2004 through 2006.
2. Improve and control access to the Lewis and Clark sites in the area.
3. Promote the Park and the area, including the Lewis and Clark sites, and downplay the road closure. Promote jointly with Canada's Waterton National Park.
4. Get the road repair done in a timely manner.
5. Maintain the Looking Glass Road to provide visitors with better access to all areas of the Park.

STATEMENT OF ROGER RUNNING CRANE, VICE-CHAIR, BLACKFEET TRIBAL BUSINESS COUNCIL, BLACKFEET NATION, BROWNING, MONTANA

Good morning or good afternoon . . . I bring you greetings from the Blackfeet Nation and would like to first of all, thank the Honorable Rick Hill who sits on the House Resources Subcommittee on National Parks and Lands for scheduling this hearing and allowing us to provide testimony for the record.

My name is Roger Running Crane, Vice-chairman of the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council, which is the governing body of the Blackfeet Nation.

Historically, Glacier National Park was part of the original land base of the Blackfeet people and was later transferred to the hands of the United States Government through a treaty in 1896. We still claim treaty rights in the park that include privileges to hunt, fish, and gather wood. Presently, our western boundary of the Blackfeet Reservation is Glacier National Park. I point this out because it docu-

ments our presence before and after the creation of the park that serves as a showcase for the entire world to enjoy its natural beauty.

With that said, The Blackfeet Nation would simply like to offer their human and natural resources in the proposed future maintenance and repair of the Going-to-the-Sun Road.

These resources consist of a qualified work force, unlimited amounts of and access to gravel and other road construction materials. We have land adjacent for recreational and campground use by the tourists who may wish to choose to visit only the east side of Logan Pass when the Going-to-the-Sun Road is under construction. Finally, the tribe also offers any other resources in assisting the Park Service to make the construction phase an experience that we can all benefit from.

In closing, Congressman Hill, the tribe is sensitive to the economic downside of the tourism industry if the road construction is to occur. By not being viable participants in that industry for reasons that I will not go into, we simply want to maximize the economic opportunities for our people who are at the lowest economic rungs of the ladder in this country. Any economic stimulus for our people is welcomed and I'm sure the surrounding communities in Blackfeet Country would agree as well since they too reap the benefits of those dollars. Again, thank you for this opportunity and we reserve the right to send additional documents for the record within the 10-day time period after this hearing.

STATEMENT OF RICHARD B. HUNT, VICE PRESIDENT, REPRESENTING FRIENDS OF
GLACIER, INC. KALISPELL, MONTANA

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Committee, Panel Members, and interested persons, thank you for this opportunity to appear before you today representing Friends of Glacier.

Friends of Glacier was formed with the purpose of assuring access to the Glacier National Park and opposing any plans to diminish access during the publication of and hearings on the draft *Newsletters* in 1997 which related to the General Management Plan (GMP) for Glacier National Park.

By 1924, Park officials had promoted a goal to "enable people to reach the interior of the Park even if they could not afford the rates of the Great Northern Railroad and its chalets." In 1925 the Bureau of Public Roads began to oversee the building of the Going-to-the-Sun Road (GTTSR) which traversed Logan Pass and connected the east and the west and gave people the opportunity to reach the interior of the Park. In 1933 Park officials attained their goal as visitation increased by 44 percent with the completion of the Road.

This marvel of engineering and construction, which literally carved a road from the sides of mountains, completed 22 miles of the most difficult stretch of the proposed road with primitive equipment by today's standards. In the current management plan developed by Glacier Park planners, the preferred alternative fast-track reconstruction of the Road plans on 4 to 6 years to complete, with the most modern technology and equipment and working on the base road already present, only 8 miles more than that done from 1925 to 1933. Alpine road construction techniques of today should be able to do better!

However, that is only part of the story. Several other shortcomings are present in the GMP related to the GTTSR. Two critical issues were identified by the Park planners related to the Road: "Visitor Use on the Going-to-the-Sun Road" and "Preservation of the Road."

(1) In the preferred alternative of the first issue, several actions to be taken relate to an expanded transportation system, modifying and/or adding pullouts, picnic areas, and short trails [although it is interesting to consider adding picnic areas on the GTTSR while removing one at the Avalanche Creek Developed Area also on the GTTSR]. There is little in the plan which identifies the impact of those "actions" on the newly completed "reconstruction." In our view some linkage should be in the GMP.

(2) In the preferred alternative of the second issue, several criteria were established to develop the "preferred," minimize impacts on visitors, and minimize impacts on the local economy. The GMP suggests that local business persons would have time to develop the mitigation for the impact of closing one side of the Park's GTTSR for 2 to 3 years, then close the other side for 2 to 3 years; it is the Park's criteria yet the GMP says little about how the Park would assist in such minimization plan. The GMP also says little about measures to be taken to minimize the impact on the visitor. These two areas of the General Management Plan are deficient, in our view.

One of the most disturbing deficiencies in the GMP is also related to one other aspect of this "oversight hearing:" *maintenance*. Little is said about long term need to maintain the Going-to-the-Sun Road after it is reconstructed. This GMP is to provide guidance to the Park for 20 or so years; yet preservation of the Road also means maintenance, and maintenance deserves a place in the General Management Plan.

Friends of Glacier recognizes and applauds plans to improve access by adding pullouts, picnic areas, short trails and emphasis upon a safe GTTSR for visitors to appreciate one of the "premier experiences" in the Park, which is to traverse the Road from east to west and west to east. We also recognize and appreciate the plan's efforts to preserve the Park and preserve this Park as a traditional western park.

Friends of Glacier stands ready to participate in finding solutions to some of the short comings we see in the GMP. Directors and officers of Friends of Glacier attended the meeting held in Kalispell by Representative Rick Hill in June 1998. Many ideas were presented including the suggestion that more time was needed to examine the data and to consider forming an advisory group with alpine road construction experts, local business persons, and interested citizens to determine the effective, economical methods of construction, time frame and strategy with the least impact on local, regional, *and international* economies as well as other activities which would mitigate the effects of this necessary and important project.

Park planners tell us on page 50 of the *Draft General Management Plan, Environmental Impact Statement* that "The National Park Service prefers an alternative that would preserve the historic character and significance of the road, complete the needed repairs before the road failed, minimize impacts on natural resources, visitors, the local economy, and minimize the cost of reconstruction. Based on the best available information, alternative A appears to best satisfy (sic) those criteria because it is the most fiscally responsible and would result in the least impact to the local and state economy over the long term. **If new data and analyses revealed information that would better respond to the criteria, a different alternative would be selected in the final plan** (emphasis added)." How would that data and analyses be "revealed" to the Park Planners?

In summary, Friends of Glacier continues to support the broadest possible access to Glacier National Park. We ask that our testimony will cause the Park planners and this Committee to seek ways to improve the connection between the two critical issues discussed: "Visitor Use on the Going-to-the-Sun Road" and "Preservation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road." We are not suggesting specific actions at this time.

As indicated, Friends of Glacier stands ready to be a part of any method for arriving at solutions to those short comings we have identified.

Thank you, Chairman Hansen for the opportunity to present our views and questions.

CURRICULUM VITAE

RICHARD B. HUNT

Employment Background

January 1986

Retired from the Santa Rosa City Schools, Santa Rosa, California

1966-1986

Director of Compensatory Education/Consolidated Application [All state and Federal education programs except Special Education and Vocational Education, Santa Rosa City Schools, Santa Rosa, California]

[Adjunct Responsibilities]

1980-83

Chairman, Executive Board, Wine Country Consortium (Napa, Novato, Santa Rosa School Districts) for School Plan Review and School Program Review Activities

1964-65

Counselor, Herbert Slater Junior High School (Part time) Grades 7-9, Santa Rosa City Schools

1964-65

Chairman, English Department, Herbert Slater Junior High School, Santa Rosa City Schools

1965

Director of Summer Reading Program, Grades 7-12. Santa Rosa City Schools, Santa Rosa, California

1955-65

Teacher of English and Journalism, Grades 7-9, Herbert Slater Junior High School, Santa Rosa, California

Education

1951

Graduated University of San Francisco, B.S. in Arts with Major in English, Minor in History and Philosophy

1955

Awarded General Secondary Credential from San Francisco State for Grades 7 through 14

1959

Earned M.A. in Secondary Education from San Francisco State

1965

Earned General Pupil Personnel Credential from Sonoma State for Grades K through 12

1969

Earned Standard Supervision Credential for Grades 7 through 14

1981

Issued Service Credential—Life Authorization, R-54 (General Administrative for Grades K through 12)

[N.B. All credentials earned or issued are for the State of California]

Special Skills

Consultant

National Assessment of Educational Progress, Denver—for Reading

American Institute for Research, Palo Alto—for Reading

1970-75

Sonoma County Office of Education—Program Planning

Marin County Office of Education—Program Planning and Program Review

1975-78

California State Department of Education—Participated in Program Review Activities

1985-86

California State Department of Education—Participated in Program Review Activities

1981

Sonoma State University—Assessed Master Degree Program for Reading

1982

Western Association of Schools and Colleges—Reviewed Castro Valley High School as School Improvement Interface Team Member

1985-86

California State Department of Education—Served as a Program Review Trainer

1998

Flathead Land Trust—Served as Facilitator at Board Retreat

1998

Kalispell City-County Planning Board and Zoning Commission—Served as Facilitator for Development of Consensus Document for Draft of Kalispell City-County Master Plan

Community Activities

1970-73

1982-84

President, Sonoma County Council for Community Services, Santa Rosa, California

1973-76

Served on Community Relations Commission, Santa Rosa City Council—one year as Chair

1982-86

Member Human Services Commission, Planning Subcommittee, Sonoma County, California

1987

Member, Citizens Personnel Committee, District 8, West Glacier Board of Trustees, West Glacier, Mt.

Member, Citizens Building Committee, District 8, West Glacier Board of Trustees, West Glacier, Mt.

1989-94

Director, Glacier Natural History Association

1991-92

President, Glacier Natural History Association West Glacier, Mt.

1996-Present

Member, Board of Directors, Flathead Community Concert Association, Kalispell, Mt.

1996-Present

Member, Director, Vice-President, Friends of Glacier, P.O. Box 5001, Kalispell, Mt 59903-5001

1997

Member, Going-to-the-Sun Road Focus Group

Military

1944-46

Served in the U. S. Navy—Honorable Discharge

STATEMENT OF WILL BROOKE, PRESIDENT, GLACIER-WATERTON VISITORS ASSOCIATION

For the record, my name is Will Brooke and I appear here today as President of the Glacier-Waterton Visitors Association which is comprised of business owners throughout the Glacier and Waterton Park area. We have members from Kalispell, Hungry Horse, West Glacier, Columbia Falls, Cut Bank, East Glacier, St. Mary, Montana as well as Waterton, Canada, to name a few of the affected areas in the Glacier-Waterton area. Some of our members, such as Roscoe Black and his family at St. Mary and Lisa Lundgren and her family at West Glacier, have been providing service to Park Visitors for over sixty-five years. Members such as these know and understand the issues and history surrounding the Park as well as anyone in the country.

I also appear here as a business owner who will be directly impacted by any decision resulting from the Glacier Park General Management Plan and EIS. My wife and I own and operate the St. Mary-Glacier Park KOA Kampground on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation outside St. Mary, Montana.

Thank you for the opportunity provide testimony on the Glacier Park General Management Plan and EIS. I appreciate the extraordinary efforts the Committee has taken to conduct this oversight hearing in Montana. I know that you have invested considerable staff time, travel budget, and your own time to travel from Washington DC to conduct this hearing. I want to especially commend Chairman Hansen and Congressman Hill for having the foresight to understand the consequences this General Management Plan will have on our lives here in Montana as well as the Northwest.

While I know the object of this hearing is to obtain comments on the draft General Management Plan, my testimony will focus today only on a few aspects of the Plan, specifically the Going-to-the Sun Road and that portion of the plan dealing with the the preservation of the historic hotels.

I want to commend the National Park Service for focusing attention on the issue of how we are going to deal with maintenance, improvement, and preservation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road. The public, the public officials we elect, and the government employees who work for the public must make a long term commitment to protect this international treasure. The present administration at Glacier National Park has been the victim of deferred maintenance by prior administrators and inconsistent Federal funding. Congress has also had its hand in this problem by removing requested funds from Federal highway dollars targeted for Going-to-the-Sun Road

Notwithstanding these problems, the Park Service's approach to this problem is—at a minimum based on improper procedure and public involvement and—at a maximum just plain wrong.

We hope the Park Service is not wrong. In fact, if the Park Service is ultimately correct in its proposed action, we will get behind the Park Service and help in every way possible by assisting in obtaining necessary funding from Congress, working on public relations and information to mitigate the perception that the Park is closed, and otherwise working with the Park Service.

However, whether the Park Service is correct in its proposed action for the Road is the key issue as I testify here today. We do not know the answer, nor do we believe any person, including the Park Service or the Federal Highway Administration knows the answer based on the information gathered and analyzed thus far.

The EIS for the General Management Plan has been proceeding through the NEPA process for years. In the most recent draft Management Plan that was released in late August, the Park Service attached a *new section* to address reconstruction and rehabilitation of the Going-to-the-Sun Road. This section proposes a major, significant new Federal action with enormous impacts to the environment and the economy. You have or will hear from other witnesses about the economic impact this decision will have on our state. They are significant. And those numbers are based on an optimistic timeline which may not be realistic after reviewing some of the Federal Highway information.

This last minute inclusion in the Plan of a major new Federal action does not comply with the letter or the spirit of the NEPA and EIS process. It has not been properly scoped, the information, studies, and data supporting the action are nothing more than generalities, and there is a general failure to consider all of the appropriate alternatives.

A General Management Plan is a general guide of how the Federal land will be managed for a period of time—usually about 10 years. The proposal for the Sun Road is not consistent with this principle. Rather, it is site specific, date specific and project specific. We believe the decision to close the Road necessarily commands a separate plan and Environmental Impact Statement.

The Plan only offers three alternatives including a “no action,” alternative. The remaining two have a narrow scope and few details. Our Association offered to help develop an alternative for the Sun Road reconstruction. This offer was refused by the Park Service on the grounds that it would be a violation of the *Federal Advisory Committee Act*. I find it difficult to believe Congress wanted to keep the public out of this kind of process when this legislation was enacted.

There are other alternatives that could have been included in this proposal. We know, based on recently obtained information from the Federal Highway Administration, that Federal Highways analyzed *at least* one other alternative that appears to have merit, yet the Park Service did not include that in the draft EIS or explain why such an alternative was not considered.

The two alternatives the Park Service selected have little supporting information, facts or details. In the information Congressman Hill obtained from the Federal Highway Administration, the figures used by Federal Highways do not match the figures presented by the Park Service in the EIS. There is no information that tells us how they used the data provided by Federal Highways or why the Park Service came up with different alternatives, with different estimated years for completion of construction projects and different estimated costs. Clearly, the public deserves to know this and to be assured that the Park Service is not attempting to gather public support for the preferred alternative by mitigating the expected impacts through selective use of numbers and data.

For instance, we note that the Federal Highway Administration has detailed a list of “essential requirements” the agencies must adhere to in order to meet the estimated timelines and costs for these alternatives. The Park Service failed to include these in the EIS, even though Federal Highway Administration repeatedly stresses that these requirements are “critical for success.” I have attached these requirements to my testimony, but our Association believes the “Essential Requirements” have their own set of impacts and the public certainly deserves to see the entire picture.

There is other information from Federal Highways which was not included as attachments to the EIS. The information that was just recently obtained from Congressman Hill’s office is not a part of the public record. We initiated a call to Congressman Hill’s office and through his efforts, as well as Senator Conrad Burns, we have now obtained this information. All of this should have been in the EIS and the public should have full access to this information.

In contrast to the lack of information which was not included, there is other information which was included that is questionable at best. For instance, we do not agree with the economic predictions suggested by the Park Service. Part of the predictions are based on a “survey” of Park Visitors. The survey was done by an engineering firm and polled tourists who had just traveled the Sun Road. You do not even need a background in polling to know that such a survey is skewed and of little value. The survey should have used as its sample population persons who had requested information about visiting Montana or Glacier Country. If you tell potential vacation planners who have not seen Glacier that the Road will be closed, the com-

petition by other states and countries for that same visitor will most assuredly cause the visitor to wait on the Glacier trip.

Even assuming the poll has validity, the Park Service is misquoting the data. The Park Service has said 80 percent of those surveyed said they would still come to Glacier. A closer reading reveals that only 60 percent of those surveyed would visit the Park if the Road is closed. While the Park Service may believe people will be able to distinguish one-way closures from total closure, the reality is any "closure" whether temporary or longterm, is reported as closure.

The Park Service uses this survey to assure businesses that they can expect only a 20 percent decline in visitation during construction. Using the number from the survey, it is probably more accurate to predict a 40+ percent decline in visitation. Ultimately, the survey is not a reliable predictor and to embark on a project with skewed unscientific information as the basis of data leaves no constituency well served. I have attached a copy of the survey for the record.

The Park Service contends they have selected Alternative A as their preferred alternative based on the "best available information." We have just now been able to review some of the information the Park Service used as their "best available information" and would submit that there is (1) gaps in the best available information, (2) the information may not have been fully analyzed and (3) possibly the best alternative has been prematurely determined.

7. Current Federal funding levels for road construction in Glacier Park do not provide for reconstruction of the Sun Road and other Park roads at the same time. Glacier Park receives about \$2.8 million a year from the ISTE. Both of the alternatives offered in the General Management Plan would cost upwards of \$80 million to complete. Knowing this increase in appropriation will take some work from Montana's Congressional Delegation, it seems we should work towards securing this commitment in conjunction with the delegation, not let fear and panic that the road is "deteriorating" create an emergency fiscal crisis in Congress.

Any decision on this road deserves and demands a strategic plan, with fully researched impacts to resources, visitors and the local economy. In fact, the Park Service agrees! In May of 1997 they wrote in an internal document "Such a huge and potentially expensive project must receive the benefit of strategic thought before the present course continues." We do not believe the issue has had the benefit of this and we urge Congress and the National Park Service to remove the proposals for reconstruction on the Going-to-the-Sun Road from the General Management Plan and give this the thought and attention it requires.

(More on the historic lodges in the final statement. Bottom line, we do not believe the Park Service can afford to buy anything when it can not maintain what is has.)

STATEMENT OF JOHN E. HELTON, ABBOTT VALLEY HOMESTEAD, MARTIN CITY,
MONTANA

To whom it may concern:

We have a small ranch outside of Martin City and in addition to raising hay and a few head of cattle we also rent out tourist cabins on our property. Needless to say, we are very interested in the expected time-table and cost to the local economy as well as the Federal coffers.

From the information gathered so far from the local and state papers and radio, we think the best path for the road work to be completed is to do it quickly, the least cost, and with the least amount of tourist disruption. To that end we support the plan to close each side of the pass while road work is being done and still allowing access to Logan Pass. While as residents of the area, we know there is so much more to Glacier than Logan Pass, we also know that it is one of the main draws to the Park. Being up front about the closures, publicizing them, and giving tourists many travel options, via Travel MT, Glacier County, etc., will help convince folks that this area is still worth visiting. Our main form of advertising is the Internet and we plan to be very up front about the expected road closures both in our web pages and in links to the expected web pages describing the road reconstruction progress—a definite must.

It can only be expected that there will be a drop in revenues from lost tourist dollars, what we don't want to see is a long term hemorrhaging. Montana, according to many of our guests, already has a reputation for summer road construction delays and nothing is going to change that unless the Earth's climate changes (hopefully not anytime soon). Having rolling delays spread over multiple years would do nothing to change the perception and would probably drive more people away over the long term. Or maybe not: we do support the "bed tax" being used to conduct polls and studies to find the best solution possible. What is definite about spreading

the reconstruction over 5 to 50 years is the greater cost. If we are going to spend more tax dollars on Glacier, we would rather not have it all go into asphalt!

Increased shuttle service, both for road workers and tourists, is a must to limit the expected congestion on the still open side of the Pass. Having good operational plans for getting injured people out of the park and to medical care is a necessary component of the road construction plans as well. Like the "show me days" the Park has for the snow clearing operations, I think the same program might apply to the road re-construction. This letter has been written before the information/comment meeting of 9/21/98 in Kalispell and we will be amending our views as further information necessitates.

To finish up, it is very evident the Going-to-the-Sun road needs a lot of work. We have been up on the road almost on a weekly basis this spring and summer, both on foot and by car and it very evident in places where the roadway is starting to fall off—not a good confidence builder for the observant driver. While rock fall from above is always going to be a problem—we hesitate to think just what the consequences would be if the roadway was to fall off with cars and people on it. I would also think waiting till 2004 might be starting late but more on that later.

Thank you for your time and effort. All good problems deserve a good solution and keeping the public informed and engaged is the best way to achieve the solution.

STATEMENT OF RAHN ARMBRUSTER, CUT BANK, MONTANA

I come here today to ask that a different route be considered as a solution to the reconstruction of "Going-to-the-Sun" Highway. The reason why I ask this request is from the observations which I have made.

At a meeting hosted by Glacier Park Incorporated, a park administrator explained the National Park Service's responsibility concerning the "Going-to-the-Sun" Highway, is to "preserve the experience." He further explained that each of us has the right to the same experience that our parents had and that of our grandparents as well. He also shared his frustration in the process of bringing necessary change to the park.

Can I ask what the foundation is that has provided the criteria for the design of the reconstruction of "Going-to-the-Sun" Highway? Is it preservation guided by tradition?

Can I ask you what effect preservation has on an environment that is under constant change—constant evolution? And what role have we taken in preserving the very namesake of this park? Perhaps preservation is not our purpose. Have we confused preservation with protection? And what effect does tradition have on the "Nature" of the park? How does a traditional boundary between two countries who have never been at war effect this park? Would criteria from the very source of why this park was created provide truer guidance for this highway's reconstruction?

I believe that in returning to it's origin we will find the common thread which has brought us here, together, today. And in returning to the origin of the National Park system, I believe we will return to the very origin of our nation. Not its constitution but its Declaration Of Independence. It was Jefferson's observation of Nature that provided source for our Nation's design. Is observation of Nature the cohesive simplicity that is the common ground that connects all the peoples of this Nation? And through following their hearts, in giving themselves what they truly needed, our forefathers gave themselves the freedom necessary for their own evolution.

Does observation of Nature lie at the very heart of why this road was originally constructed? Would observation of Nature guided by the heart provide truer criteria for the reconstruction of this highway?

Through allowing our heart to guide us, will the need for protecting this park and its inhabitants diminish with time? To the east of Glacier Park lies the sculpture studio of Bob Scriver. And through observation you will note the evolution of his work over time. His early works being that of taxidermy evolving, as Bob followed his heart, to sculpture. Where he captures the beauty and spirit of the animal without destroying it.

I believe something very special occurs when we allow ourselves to be guided by our heart. We open our minds. Somehow, in a manner which I cannot explain, our heart leads us to the possibilities. Possibilities which are firmly rooted in love—in understanding and respect. And love never makes anything less, or leaves anything the same. Love always makes more through it's actions. I believe it is our mind which allows us to see only the probabilities.

And what difference would there be in the reconstruction of this highway if "Observation of Nature guided by the Heart" were the criteria for its design. Would our heart illuminate possible solutions for its reconstruction, that our mind cannot see,

that would allow for continual flow of observers over this mountain? Giving us something we truly need?

Can the heart guide us to a solution that would truly reflect the beauty of Glacier—of Nature itself—and the beauty of us as humans? Can our heart guide us to a design that would allow a mountain to be a mountain where she needs to be? And isn't this what our National Park system is all about? Allowing Nature to be itself?

Could a road be designed so that it too reflects who we are as humans. Through observation of our own Nature, are we not both a physical being and a spiritual being? And is our spirituality somehow connected to the depth of our observations?

And what could be learned through depth in observation of the Nature of such a road. If we could see the beauty in a road, which allows a mountain to be a mountain, could a Nation also see the beauty in allowing its peoples the freedom to be human? Could a Nation also see the beauty in returning to its source for guidance into the future?

What risk do we take in returning to our origin to seek guidance for our future? Do we fear that we won't find truth in our very foundation? I believe that when we allow an open mind to guide us back to our source, we will make the return without judgment. And in doing so we will see the beauty and love of which our foundation is made. We will find our heart. We will discover the cohesive simplicity which connects us all together on earth. And somehow when we return to our heart, our origin, with an open mind something very wonderful happens—we open a door.

And as lyric in the "Love Theme" from the motion picture "Titanic" states:

"Once more we open the door ...

and the heart goes on."

Thank you for your time and consideration.

STATEMENT OF SHARLON L. WILLOWS, C.L.A., CERTIFIED LEGAL ASSISTANT,
ADMINISTRATIVE LAW, HUNGRY HORSE, MONTANA

Hello Representative Hill. My name is Sharlon Willows, I am a Certified Paralegal in Administrative Law, I have personally conducted research on Going-to-the-Sun Road (GTSR) and other Glacier Park management issues for the last 15 years throughout the early development of GTSR Cultural Management Plan (which isn't listed in the Draft EIS Bibliography) and Glacier's Transportation Plan of (Jan. 1991). As coordinator of CCP, Inc., I have conducted extensive FOIA research on these and other Glacier Park matters over the years under 5 USC 552.

I urge Congressional attention to some very critical omissions and deceptions that underly the newly released GMP DEIS. The seriousness of these require an immediate congressional inquiry into essential missing or unavailable background information regarding the safety & condition of GTSR such as:

- (1) the comprehensive plan prepared by FHWA to develop & justify the construction alternatives is not listed in Draft EIS Bibliography and is only briefly mentioned on p. 48. Where is it? Where are the details? This document should be available for interested parties to review during the EIS comment period. Why are the construction alternatives so general, vague, and unsubstantiated?
- (2) the Bibliography shows numerous recent MPS contracts were let to Bioeconomics, Inc. and Robert Peccia & Associates for background studies on Socio-Economic impacts & Traffic Safety Analysis for the Draft EIS. The DEIS states these studies are "on file at Denver Service Center" (p.287,293). Why are they unavailable? NEPA requires these essential background analysis to be available for review during the DEIS comment period. What can Rep. Hill do to make these documents available now for review as required by NEPA regulations?

Glacier's historic management philosophy has been development outside the park (see 1977 Master Plan FEIS). Therefore, a sizable local economy has grown over the years *based on historic management philosophy*, that is, the 1977 Master Plan FEIS and the park's Statements for Management documents issued regularly since then.

The park is lying to the public by claiming they are "Keeping it like it is." The new GMP Draft EIS secretly changes management philosophy; first, by failing to disclose the Existing or historic management zoning (as found in Glacier's Statements for Management, map attached), which is a NEPA violation on its' face (NEPA requires disclosure of Existing Conditions, necessary for agency and public review. How else can we know what the baseline is, before the park makes substantial changes?). Secondly, by presenting a totally new management zoning scenario for the park on (pgs. 19-40). This is major deception being perpetrated in the draft EIS without public involvement or knowledge; that is, the secret rezoning of Glacier Park.

Based on my years of research and gutfeeling, I believe the Park is intentionally delaying necessary *and previously planned incremental repair projects while expecting the road to fail in order to obtain a massive contract for their Preferred Alternative A* (p.49). *This may be agency negligence under Emergency Repair regulations and requirements.* Waiting for construction in 2004 appears unreasonable.

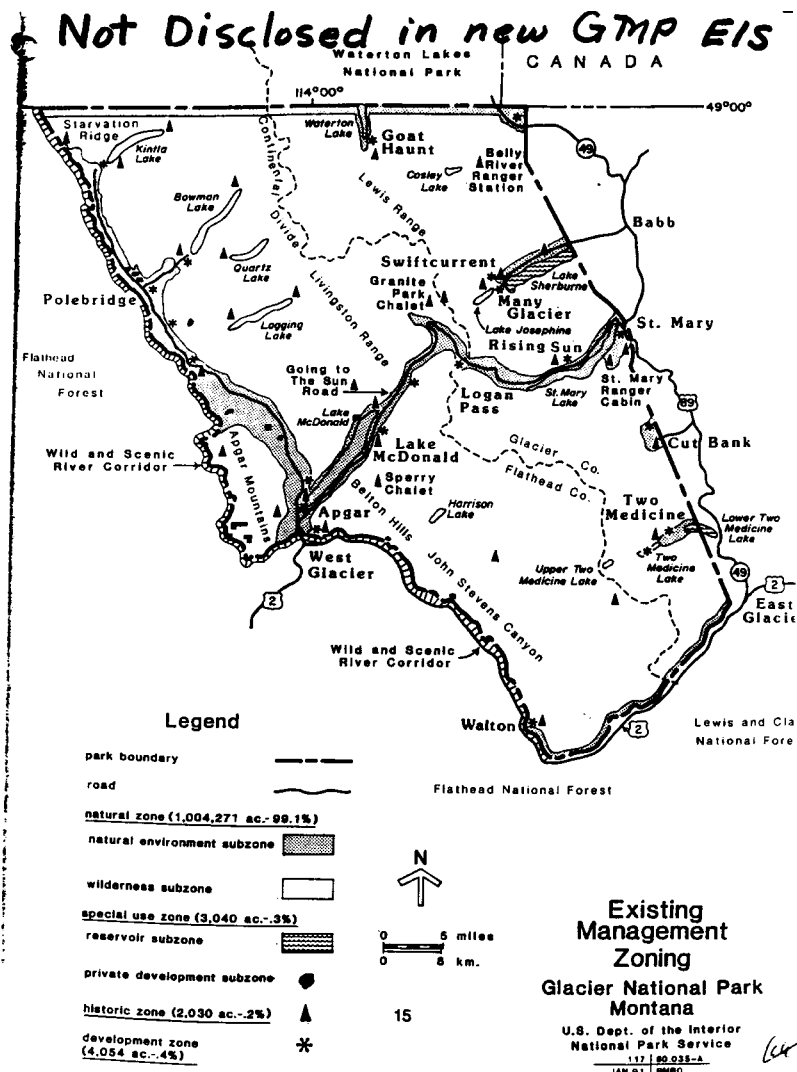
Meanwhile, the Park has secretly rezoned the GTS Road corridor from primarily natural & historic zone to "visitor services zone" (compare SFM Existing Zoning map attached with GMP DEIS, pgs. 19,20,30). In other words, while local businesses may suffer outside the park while the road is shut down, a multinational corporation, the owner of Glacier's major concessionaire, has achieved a new free reign for new publicly funded facility development inside the park. The secret rezoning situation appears to be a preplanned corporate takeover of Glacier Park corridor business interests, an inappropriate collaboration that underlies this GMP DEIS.

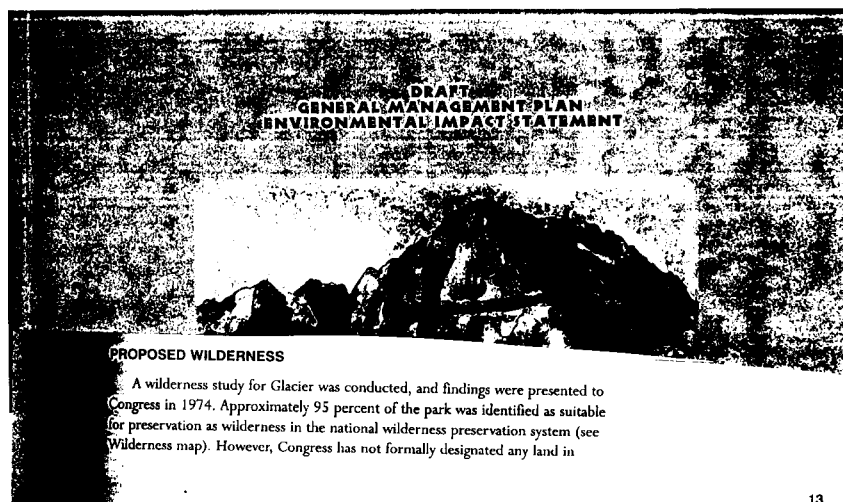
In summary, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) studies, assessments, and plans to proceed repairing the GTS road in timely incremental projects are missing from the Draft EIS record. These were background studies prepared for the 1991 Transportation Plan. The DEIS also fails to consider a night construction alternative to facilitate necessary repairs in a more timely manner; another indication that delay is the game.

The GTS Road has been studied completely. Where is this information? As confirmed by park officials recently on one of my research tours, there are thirteen (13) "hotspots" on GTSR. These are areas that could easily or currently do qualify under DOT Emergency construction regulations. Therefore, we've got a serious negligent scenario here, with Federal agencies "hiding" the most relevant facts in an unnecessary ploy to shut down GTS Road and secretly rezone Glacier for interior development.

Again, Glacier's historic management as been development outside the park (see 1977 Master Plan FEIS). If the public wanted to "Keep it the way it is," why the mayor secret zoning changes with possible serious adverse consequences for local businesses outside the park that pay local and state taxes the multinational corp. doesn't.

Please understand, further study is a trap to create irresponsible delay & allow the road to fail, thus allowing Federal agencies to have no choice but close the road, adversely impacting local businesses outside the park. Meanwhile, the multinational corp. gets its' foot in the door with the secret rezoning of Glacier's GTS Road corridor. This scenario requires immediate Congressional investigation. Thank you very much for the opportunity to be heard.





13

THE PLAN

NON-WILDERNESS AREAS = 5%



TOTAL PARK = 1,013,572.42 ACRES

Glacier as wilderness. NPS policy requires that the proposed wilderness land in Glacier be managed as wilderness until such time as Congress either formally designates the land as wilderness or rejects the designation.

[Proposed wilderness areas] shall be administered for the use of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness areas, so as to provide for the preservation of their wilderness character, and

... park visitors must accept wilderness largely on its own terms, without modern facilities provided for their comfort or convenience. Users must also accept certain risks, including possible dangers arising from wildlife, weather conditions, physical features, and other natural phenomena that are inherent in the various elements and conditions that comprise a wilderness experience and primitive methods of travel.
(1989 NPS Management Policies)

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result in the imprint of man's work being substantially noticeable, the trail or other feature should not be included in wilderness.

(See Management Zoning 2:7, Land Protection Plans 3:1, Mineral Development 6:10, Mineral Development 8:12, Grazing 8:14, Trails and Walks 9:9)

Management Policies

U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1988

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

General Policy

For the purposes of these policies, the term "wilderness" includes the categories of designated wilderness, potential wilderness, and recommended/study wilderness, and these policies apply regardless of category. Designated wilderness is wilderness that has been established by Congress; potential wilderness is wilderness that has been authorized by Congress but not yet established due to temporary incompatible conditions; recommended/study wilderness is an area that has been recommended to Congress, or is being studied for recommendation, for establishment as wilderness. Caves with all entrances in wilderness will be managed as wilderness. *

Wherever a wilderness area is designated within a park, the preservation of wilderness character and resources becomes an additional statutory purpose of the park. Within a designated wilderness area, the preservation of wilderness character and resources while providing for appropriate use is the primary management responsibility (other than activities related to the saving of human life). Activities to achieve all other statutory purposes of an area designated as wilderness will be carried out in accordance with applicable provisions of the Wilderness Act so as to preserve wilderness resources and character. The establishment of wilderness within a park will in no manner lower the standards evolved for the use and preservation of that area under other statutes.

The National Park Service will manage areas of potential wilderness as wilderness, to the extent that existing nonconforming uses will allow, and will seek to eliminate the temporary conditions that preclude wilderness designation.

The Park Service will take no action that would diminish the wilderness suitability of an area recommended for wilderness study or for wilderness designation until the legislative process has been completed. Until that process has been completed, management decisions pertaining to recommended wilderness and wilderness study areas will be made in expectation of eventual wilderness designation.

All categories of wilderness lands will be classified as natural zones. A wilderness subzone may be used if such a designation will facilitate or support planning activities or management actions.

The National Park Service will seek to achieve consistency in wilderness management objectives, techniques, and practices, on both a servicewide and an interagency basis. The Service will seek to maintain effective intra-agency and interagency communications and will encourage, sponsor, and participate in intra-agency and interagency workshops and seminars designed to promote the sharing of ideas, concerns, and techniques related to wilderness management.

(See *Management Zoning* 2:7, *Land Protection Plans* 3:1, *Potential Wilderness* 6:3)

Responsibility

NPS responsibility for carrying out wilderness preservation mandates will be shared by the Director, regional directors, and superintendents of parks with designated, potential, or recommended/study wilderness. Interagency cooperation and coordination and training responsibilities will also be carried out at the Washington, region, and park levels. Wilderness management coordinators will be assigned at each of these administrative levels to carry out these responsibilities effectively and to facilitate efforts to seek servicewide and interagency consistency in wilderness management techniques.

Wilderness Management Plan

The superintendent of each park containing wilderness will develop and maintain a wilderness management plan to guide the preservation, management, and use of that wilderness. This plan may be developed as a separate document or as an action component of another appropriate management plan, such as the general management plan or backcountry management plan, and it will be supported by appropriate documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. The plan will be developed with public involvement and will contain specific, measurable management objectives that address the preservation of wilderness-dependent cultural and natural resources and values in order to achieve the public purposes specified by the Wilderness Act and other appropriate legislation.

(See *Park Planning Process and Products* 2:4)

Management Techniques

The Wilderness Act generally prohibits motorized equipment or mechanized transport in designated wilderness areas; however, it allows them "as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act." In protecting wilderness character and resources and in managing wilderness use in accordance with the Wilderness Act, the National Park Service will adhere closely to the "minimum tool" concept. Superintendents, in accordance with the wilderness management plan, will select the minimum tool or administrative practice necessary to successfully and safely accomplish the management objective with the least adverse impact on wilderness character and resources. All decisions pertaining to administrative practices and use of equipment in wilderness will be based on this concept. Potential disruption of wilderness character and resources and applicable safety concerns will be considered before, and given significantly more weight than, economic efficiency. If some compromise of wilderness resources or character is unavoidable, only those actions that have localized, short-term adverse impacts will be acceptable.

Administrative use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport, including motorboats and aircraft, will be authorized in accordance with the park's wilderness management plan only (1) if determined by the superintendent to be the minimum tool needed by management to achieve the purposes of the area, or (2) in emergency situations involving human health or safety or the

STATEMENT OF GILBERT K. BISSELL, OWNER/MANAGER, AERO INN, KALISPELL,
MONTANA

Dear Congressman Hill:

As the owner and manager of a hotel in the Flathead Valley and past president of the Flathead Valley Chamber of Commerce, I would like to express how critical the Going-To-The-Sun Road construction will be to my business and to many businesses in Northwest Montana.

At the Aero Inn I employ an average of 14 employees. Several hotels in the Flathead Valley employ significantly more employees than the Aero Inn, many employ less. We make 60 percent of our annual revenue during the months of June, July, August and September. (1993 59 percent, 1994 60 percent, 1997 58 percent). A vast majority of our summer guests are Glacier Park visitors. To lose this critical summer season revenues would literally spell the end of my business and many others throughout Northwest Montana. The loss of any summer season would directly impact hundreds of lodging industry employees. This doesn't even begin to address the impact on retailers or the indirect impact of money spent by tourism industry employees and businesses.

I don't think that all Going-To-The-Sun Road construction options nor all economic impacts have been adequately explored. The Going-To-The-Sun Road is undeniably a national treasure which must be preserved for future generations and which must be addressed soon. There are no cheap or easy solutions to repairing the road, but the only viable solution is a cooperative effort between the Federal Government, The National Park Service, Travel Montana, The State Government, Local Chambers of Commerce, Local Convention and Visitor Bureau's and the citizens of Northwest Montana.

A comprehensive marketing plan is absolutely critical for future "damage control" before construction is begun. Extensive resources and money for this plan must be made available on the Federal, State and Local level.

I have always felt that Glacier National Park needs to do more positive press releases such as "we have _____ campsites open, the waterfalls are at their peak, the flowers are blooming now, _____ miles of trail are now open and passable, cruises are available on _____ lakes, _____ rangers are on duty to give nature tours and talks" etc. What we typically hear is negative such as "a boulder fell on a tourist, a portion of the Sun Road collapsed, or a bear munched someone" (granted these are newsworthy stories!) With a portion of the Sun Road closed, positive press releases will be even more critical.

Please do not interpret this as a motel owner worried about losing a little business. If that were the case, we'd budget for a slow year or two and survive it. I'm worried about a summer or more, bad enough to bankrupt our business and that of many others in the Flathead Valley. The construction plan and the marketing plan demand very careful forethought and expertise. Please insure that this plan is an extremely high priority.

If I can be of any assistance to you, please feel free to contact me at any time. Thank you for your time and your concern in this matter.

CAROL H. JACOBY, DIVISION ENGINEER FOR WESTERN FEDERAL LANDS, HIGHWAY DIVISION, FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION, RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS FROM MR. HILL

Question: Could you provide information regarding curve widening and the selection and application of road design standards?

Answer: The American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO) issues a reference guide titled, "A Policy on Geometric Design of Highways and Streets." This publication is updated periodically to reflect changes in design practice. In addition, AASHTO publishes numerous highway industry design and construction manuals, which are used as "guides" in the application of highway engineering.

In 1984, the National Park Service published "Park Road Standards," which defines the standards to which the park roads should be constructed, operated and maintained. The development of these standards included an issuance of a Notice of Public Review, published in the May 1, 1984, *Federal Register*. Consistent with the philosophy encompassed in the AASHTO design guide, the National Park Road Standards allow for flexibility in the planning and design of park road facilities. Flexibility is necessary to accommodate variations in the type and intensity of the use, the terrain and climate conditions, and to protect the natural and cultural resources in the National Park system areas.

Question: What is the application of design standards on park roads in Glacier National Park, where, as part of an ongoing construction project, pavement material is being removed?

Answer: In Glacier National Park, there is a 4000 linear foot section of road which was built to a 22-foot travel way width. This section of the road was widened to a 26 foot travel way width as a result of flooding repairs completed in the 1960's. As part of the ongoing construction contract, 4 feet of pavement width in this 4000 foot roadway section is being removed to provide a consistent 22 foot travel way for the entire section of road. A 22 foot paved travel way for the Going to the Sun Road is consistent with the NPS Park Road Standards publication.

U. S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
SUB-COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS

FUTURE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD

JOSEPH H. UNTERREINER, PRESIDENT
ASSOCIATED CHAMBERS OF THE FLATHEAD VALLEY

Kalispell, Montana
September 21, 1998

Thank you for the opportunity to address this committee with written and oral testimony on the future maintenance and repair of the Going-To-The-Sun Road in Glacier National Park. I would like to express our sincere appreciation to Congressman Hill for the leadership he has shown on this issue by arranging for this hearing. The effort he has made to understand this issue, its implications on Northwest Montana's economy, and his steps taken to ensure the best possible course of action, are recognized and appreciated by the business community.

I represent the Associated Chambers of the Flathead Valley, an association of six chambers of commerce and three tourism organizations, consisting of 1,800 businesses and organizations in Northwest Montana.

The Sun Road is a critical economic, social, cultural, and historic asset of this area. There is, perhaps, no other singular resource in the Flathead that affects more people both personally and professionally than the Sun Road. It is essential that this road be maintained and repaired in a way that provides for the enjoyment of future generations, while minimizing the economic and social impact to the current generation. There are several things that Congress can do to help achieve this goal:

1. Ensure that the best possible road construction expertise is applied to this engineering challenge; make impact reduction the highest priority.
2. Provide public education funding to minimize projected visitation losses as part of the appropriation request.
3. Provide financial relief for those businesses most severely affected by the negative impacts of reconstruction.
4. Utilize business input.
5. Provide adequate funding for National Park roads.

IMPORTANCE OF THE GOING-TO-THE-SUN-ROAD

Data from the University of Montana's Institute for Tourism and Recreational Research indicates that 25% of non-resident tourists to Montana come primarily to see Glacier National Park. This destination tourism attraction benefits not just the Glacier area, but other cities and towns that line the roads to and from the Park. Tourists come because of

the unparalleled scenery, active glaciers, and wildlife. They come because Going-To-The-Sun Road, a national historic landmark, offers some of the most accessible, spectacular scenery anywhere in North America.

ENSURE THE BEST POSSIBLE CONSTRUCTION EXPERTISE IS APPLIED TO THIS ENGINEERING CHALLENGE; MAKE IMPACT REDUCTION THE HIGHEST PRIORITY.

The National Park Service and the Federal Highway Administration have developed three concepts for preserving the Sun Road. This is a good start. Two economic impact studies have both concluded that the Fast-Track Option (4-6 years) has the least economic impact and the lowest cost of construction. This is the Park's preferred alternative.

However, it is now time to refine the two action alternatives by using the best experts available, including financial incentives to complete the work as quickly as possible, and completing a formal engineering study.

Consult with the best road construction expertise both domestically and internationally. The findings of the two economic studies on this issue indicate that the quicker construction is completed, the more negative impacts are minimized. Therefore, every effort should be made to explore techniques that might hasten the reconstruction period. Sections of retaining wall might be pre-fabricated off-site, for example. Or, perhaps, international firms that have extensive experience in high altitude road work might have innovations to offer.

Structure a bid that provides incentives for early completion. If we examine the reconstruction of Interstate 10 in Los Angeles after the Northridge Earthquake, we can see how financial incentives were used effectively. The time of completion was substantially reduced by running around-the-clock shifts. This more aggressive approach may reduce time on the Fast Track Option (4-6 years), or reduce the time on the Accelerated Option (10+ years) to a more acceptable time frame. If the National Park Service or the Federal Highway Administration are prohibited from offering incentives for early completion, we urge Congress to waive that restriction for this project.

Obtain a Formal Engineering Study. We support the efforts of Congressman Hill and Senator Burns to have a formal engineering study produced on the Sun Road. We may find that some sections do not need reconstruction.

In any event, loss of visitation and its resulting impact on business losses must be viewed as real costs in preserving the Sun Road. Early completion incentives can be justified when weighed against the total cost of economic loss and the impact on communities. Reducing these negative impacts must be made our highest priority.

PROVIDE PUBLIC EDUCATION FUNDS TO MINIMIZE VISITATION LOSSES AS PART OF THE APPROPRIATION REQUEST.

The appropriation request should include funding for a fully developed public education program to help offset anticipated visitor losses. The plan should include input from Glacier National Park, Travel Montana, the Associated Chambers, the Blackfeet Nation and others.

We suggest that funding for the public education plan be made part of the congressional request for appropriation on the Sun Road reconstruction by the Park Service. Visitors are already beginning to question whether the Sun Road is still open. To help limit the negative impact, we encourage Congress to fund and implement the plan prior to the commencement of construction, with sufficient investment to continue to educate and inform the public well after the completion of construction.

PROVIDE FINANCIAL RELIEF FOR THOSE BUSINESSES MOST SEVERELY AFFECTED BY THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF RECONSTRUCTION.

We request that you direct sub-committee staff to determine whether a precedent exists for providing financial relief for businesses most severely affected by major road reconstruction projects conducted by either the National Park Service or the Federal Highway Administration. If so, we think funding for such a program should also be made a part of the request for appropriation.

GIVE CONSIDERATION TO BUSINESS IMPACTS AND PREFERENCES

During the past week, 127 area businesses responded to a two-question survey on the maintenance and repair of the Sun Road. These were the results:

1. Which is your preferred alternative for preserving the Going-to-the-Sun Road in Glacier Park?

	<u>Percent Responding</u>
A. Fast-track Reconstruction (4-6 years)	60%
B. Accelerated Reconstruction (10+ years)	20%
C. Status Quo	6%
D. Other	13%
Did not respond	1%

2. Which statement best describes your attitude on this issue?

A. When it comes to Flathead County roads, we should get as much as we can, as fast as we can.	25%
B. The alternatives appear reasonable. Let's proceed with the most effective, lowest cost option.	40%

C.	We don't have enough information to make a decision.	
	Let's get more comment and/or another alternative.	17%
D.	No opinion.	5%
E.	Other	9%
	Did not respond	4%

In discussing this issue with businesses, it is clear that many are drawn to the Fast-Track Option (4-6 years) because it has been identified as the lowest cost, least impact alternative. We believe that a formal engineering study and consultation with road experts will reveal refinements of these alternatives that will accelerate the project.

Some view projections of visitation losses as significantly understated. We think this is another reason to complete the work as quickly as possible.

Still others promote a "more accelerated" version of the Accelerated Reconstruction Option (10+ years) because cross-park travel is still possible under this alternative. By keeping a lane of traffic open, in spite of major delays, the road can still be advertised as "open". However, there would need to be a drastic reduction in the length of construction to justify the additional cost and business impact of this version.

PROVIDE ADEQUATE FUNDING FOR SUN ROAD MAINTENANCE

We find ourselves in this difficult situation because Sun Road maintenance has not kept pace with deterioration. Going forward, we urge Congress to provide the funding necessary for the Park Service to stay current with road repair.

Congressional approval for allowing Parks to retain a portion of entrance fees is a step in the right direction. We think this policy should be continued and, perhaps, expanded.

CONCLUSION

The Sun Road is the main attraction to some of the most beautiful scenery in North America. . . and it is disintegrating. There is no perfect time to rebuild a stretch of road that presents some of the most difficult conditions imaginable. But, given the recent increase in funding for the Highway Bill, and the current budget surplus, we should act now while the window of opportunity is still available. We could choose to delay and study further, or do nothing at all, but if we do we risk losing the road altogether.

Because the negative impact on business is reduced when the work is completed quickly, we urge Congress to remove whatever regulatory restrictions stand in the way of quickest possible completion. In the meantime, we should complete the engineering study and begin work immediately on refining alternatives and marketing the tremendous asset we have in Glacier Park.

WRITTEN STATEMENT BY MIKE BAGGETTA & JOE GALLIANI, FOUNDING PARTNERS, THE PARKS COMPANY, SUBMITTED TO THE SUBCOMMITTEE ON NATIONAL PARKS AND PUBLIC LANDS, HOUSE COMMITTEE ON RESOURCES CONCERNING THE FUTURE MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR OF THE GOING-TO-THE-SUN ROAD AT GLACIER NATIONAL PARK, MONTANA

October 1, 1998

Mr. Chairman, members of the subcommittee, having traveled from Oregon and California respectively to attend these hearings as well as tour Glacier National Park and the Going-to-the-Sun Road firsthand, we want to thank Congressman Hill for the opportunity to comment on the record.

First off, we want to praise the warmth and hospitality of the people of Montana, our gracious hosts, and to add our voices to the on-going chorus of those before us who have sang the glory of Glacier National Park and the beautiful lands of Montana that surround it.

We would also be remiss if we did not offer our respect and admiration for Superintendent, David Milhalic, Deputy Superintendent "Butch" Farabee, and every one of their Rangers and NPS staff we were fortunate enough to encounter.

As a first time visitor to Glacier National Park and its surrounding communities we are struck by not only the breathtaking majesty of the area, but also the singular focus and perspective offered by the local elected officials and business owners in regards to the subject of maintenance and repairs to the Going-to-the-Sun Road, and the impact of same on their personal finances.

We completely empathize with small business people facing a difficult challenge and potential loss of revenue due to circumstances out of their control.

But the idea that those who profit from their proximity to the park, should be somehow financially compensated by tax dollars when the park does not provide the expected customer base, seems both unreasonably selfish and almost un-American.

We have always believed that the strong and independent people of Montana wanted less government involvement in their businesses and the free enterprise system, not more.

Glacier National Park is a National Park, not a Montana State Park. it belongs to every taxpaying American. As much to the family from Midtown Manhattan as it does to the family from Main Street, Missoula.

The idea that the park owes local businesses anything in the way of guaranteed income makes us wonder how those local businesses define their own social responsibility to the park.

If a gateway community business that relies on the park for its livelihood is partnered with Glacier National Park by giving something back to support the park, then they would have a great deal more credibility when they ask that we weigh their profit-margins in our decision-making regarding what is best for the health, safety and future conditions of the Going-to-the-Sun Road, and the park as a whole.

Glacier National Park was in "business" long before there were any stores, RV campgrounds, gas stations or mini-marts developed to take advantage of visitor needs.

To complain nonproductively about telling the truth by using the word "closure," only reduces the time, energy and creativity needed to overcome this challenge to visitation, as well as public perceptions.

The concerns and issues expressed by those testifying from the local communities do not seem to be centered on what is best for the Going-to-the-Sun Road or Glacier National Park. They appear to be solely focused on what is best for the people who earn their livings as a result of operating a business in proximity to the park.

If a four to six year investment in time via the so called, "fast track" plan rehabilitates the Going-to-the-Sun Road for another 40-50 years into the future, the challenge and inconvenience to the local businesses will be a judicious, long-term investment - - both for the business owners and the owners of the park, the American citizens in all 50 states.

Our thanks again to Congressman Hill for the opportunity to present our views on the record.

Most Sincerely yours,

Mike Baggetta	Joe Galliani
Founding Partner	Founding Partner
The Parks Company	The Parks Company



OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT
GMP PLANNING OFFICE, GLACIER NATIONAL PARK
WEST GLACIER, MONTANA 5993

GENTLEMEN;

I AM WRITING MY COMMENTS IN THE HOPE THAT YOUR PROPOSED CLOSURE OF THE GOING TO THE SUN ROAD FOR A PERIOD OF FOUR OR FIVE YEARS WILL BE POSTPONED UNTIL A MUCH BETTER SOLUTION CAN BE IMPLEMENTED.

IF THIS CLOSURE TAKES PLACE NOT ONLY WILL I LOOSE MY BUSINESS, IF I DON'T GET GOVERNMENT HELP, THE ENTIRE FLATHEAD VALLEY WILL SUFFER EXTREME HARDSHIPS & SOME SMALL BUSINESSES MAY NOT BE ABLE TO RECOVER AS WELL.

THE PARK SERVICE HAS KNOWN FOR YEARS THAT THE ROAD WAS GOING TO NEED MAJOR REPAIRS, AND OTHER THAN CLOSING THE ROAD, THEY HAVEN'T COME UP WITH ANY NEW AND BETTER IDEAS.

NOW IT SEEMS THEY HAVE SOLD A LOT OF PEOPLE A BILL OF GOODS, WITH THIS PLAN, THERE ONLY SOLUTION, OR THE EASIEST SOLUTION FOR THE BUREAUCRATS AT THE PARK SERVICE.

THE PLAN, IT IS NICELY BOUND WITH A NICE COVER & PLENTY OF NICE PICTURES, BUT NOTHING CREATIVE WITHIN ITS PAGES.

WHO SHOUTED THE LOUDEST WHEN THE SO CALLED GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN, BY THE PRESIDENT? GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES THAT'S WHO. THEY DIDN'T LOOSE A PENNY, THEY RECEIVED A FEW WEEKS PAID VACATION. THEY WON'T LOOSE A CENT WHEN THE ROAD CLOSES EITHER, NOT A DAYS PAY, BUT WE WILL.

ITS OK FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR (WHO PAYS THE SALARIES AND THERE RETIREMENTS INCOME, FOR THE GOVERNMENT CIVIL SERVANTS) TO SUFFER LOSSES, NOT ONLY WAGES BUT THERE ENTIRE LIFE'S SAVINGS AND INVESTMENT, BUT DON'T TAKE EVEN A DAYS PAY FROM A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE, BECAUSE 80% CAST THERE BALLOTS FOR THE SYSTEM THAT GIVES THEM NOT ONLY THE BEST BENEFITS AND HEALTH'S INSURANCE, BUT NOW PROPOSES AN 7 1/2 % RAISE OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS, BECAUSE THERE'S MORE MONEY TO BE SPENT, SO LETS SPEND IT WHERE IT GET THE VOTES!

IF BILL CLINTON CAN GIVE THE PEOPLE IN TEXAS & OKLAHOMA \$150 MILLION TO BUY FANS AND AIR CONDITIONERS ETC. FOR A HOT SPELL.

Designer Log Chalets for Two
P.O. Box 115 • West Glacier, Montana 59936
406-387-4448



THAT LIKE A BAD HAIRCUT WILL RECOVER IN 4 OR 4 WEEK; THEN HE OR THE GOVERNMENT CAN SURELY AFFORD TO LOCATE THE NECESSARY FUNDS FOR THE ROAD REPAIR, AND THE ESTIMATED \$165,000.000+ THIS VALLEY IS GOING TO LOOSE EACH YEAR.

BY THE WAY IF THE PEOPLE IN TEXAS DON'T CARE TO SAVE THE NECESSARY MONEY TO PURCHASE THERE OWN FANS ETC. WHO'S FAULT IS THAT?

DO WE NEED TO BUY THEM HEATERS THIS WINTER IN CASE OF A THREE OR FOUR WEEK COLD SPELL. OR FLY SWATTERS IN CASE OF BREAKOUT OF INSECTS DO TO A RAINY SEASON? THE ANSWER IS YES IF IT WILL BUY VOTES!

I AM NOT KIDDING WHEN I SAY I COULD LOOSE EVERY THING MY WIFE AND I HAVE WORKED FOR OVER THE YEARS, (I HAVE NEVER TAKEN A DIME FROM THE GOVERNMENT I MIGHT ADD) YOU SEE I'M ONE OF THOSE RARE BREEDS OF PERSONS, I WORK HARD TO ACCOMPLISH SOMETHING IN MY LIFE.

IF THIS GOES FORWARD AS PLANED WITH OUT "JUST COMPENSATION" YOU WILL SEE A LAWSUIT LARGER THAN YOU MIGHT IMAGINE. BY THE WORKERS AND BUSINESS COMMUNITY IN THE FLATHEAD. I AM NOW PREPARING TO PUT UP \$5000 DOLLARS FOR MY SHARE OF THE LEGAL COST FOR A PROMINENT LAW FIRM TO REPRESENT OUR INTEREST.

THE SOLUTION IS REALLY QUITE SIMPLE. OF COURSE, BUT ITS GOING TO TAKE SOME SELLING AND ARM TWISTING BY THE PARK SERVICE AND MAYBE SOME OF YOU IN THE SERVICE WHO SPEARHEAD THIS WILL BE POLITICALLY SHUNNED, BUT THE PARK IS NOT FOR THE PARK SERVICE, ITS FOR THE PUBLIC TO ENJOY AND THE PARK SERVICE TO MAINTAIN. ITS THE DECENT THING TO DO.

THE ANSWER "IS TO EXTEND THE MANY GLACIER ROAD TO THE NORTH FORK ROAD," WHICH WOULD CREATE A LOOP. THIS HAS BEEN NEEDED FOR A LONG TIME AND THOUGH NOT EASY TERRAIN, WITH THE EQUIPMENT THE ARMY CORE OF ENGINEERS HAS NOW, A MUCH EASIER TASK THAN THOSE WHO BUILT THE ROAD MUCH WITH ELBOW GREASE AND SHOVELS IN THE TWENTIES.

THIS WOULD ALLOW, AFTER ITS COMPLETION, TO REPAIR THE GOING TO THE SUN ROAD AT ANY TIME IN THE FUTURE; AND FUTURE REPAIRS TO THE NEW ROAD, BY CLOSING ONE OR THE OTHER AS NEEDED. NOT TO MENTION EMERGENCY CLOSURES WHICH HAPPEN FROM TIME TO TIME, ACCIDENTS, ROCK SLIDES ETC.

IF THIS IS MARKETED CORRECTLY, IT SHOULD BE LABELED "THE GOING TO THE SUN ROAD TWO" OR EQUAL. THIS WOULD AROUSE PUBLIC INTEREST AND KEEP THE VISITORS COMING TO THE PARK, WHICH WOULD IN TURN HELP PAY FOR THE IMPROVEMENTS.

SINCE ONLY 5 % OF THE PARK IS NOW OPEN TO THE PUBLIC, THIS WOULD ADD ONLY ANOTHER 2 % OR SO. SINCE THE VAST MAJORITY OF VISITORS ONLY WALK OFF THE ROAD ABOUT A QUARTER OF A MILE, IT WOULD HAVE LITTLE OR NO EFFECT ON THE ECOSYSTEM.



THE OTHER BENEFITS ARE, THE VISITORS WOULD BE DISPERSED OVER A LARGER AREA OF ROAD SO THERE WOULD BE LESS CONGESTION, AND BY ADDING ANOTHER VISITORS INFORMATION CENTER ON THE NORTH FORK IT WOULD RELIEVE THE PRESSURE ON THE EXISTING VISITORS CENTERS.

THIS WOULD PLACE NEW AND ADDED INTEREST ON THE FAR WEST BOUNDARY OF THE PARK WHERE VISITATION IS LOW.

BELIEVE ME, AS THE POPULATION GROWS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY, MORE AND MORE PEOPLE WILL BE LOOKING FOR PLACES TO GO WITH LESS CONGESTION, THE ROAD IS GOING TO BE NEEDED SOONER OR LATER.

LETS DO THIS RIGHT, AND DO IT NOW, "SOONER THAN LATER"

I CAN BE REACHED AT 387-4448

HOPEFULLY A REFRESHING VOICE WITH A SOLUTION

RESPECTIVELY,


JAMES E. KENNEDY
5/30/98

PS. JUST SOME OF THE PEOPLE AND BUSINESSES THAT WILL BE DIRECTLY EFFECTED OR DEVASTATED;

PRINTERS-FISHING GUIDES-BOATING-FOOD SUPPLIES - SERVICE STATIONS-
GROCERY STORES- MALL S- PHOTO STORES-RESTAURANTS-RAFTING
COMPANIES-CAR RENTALS-AIRPORT EMPLOYEES & LANDING FEES-MISC.
TOURS-GIFT SHOPS-HOTELS, MOTELS, AND RESORTS AND THE MANY OTHER
SERVICE INDUSTRY EMPLOYEES.

September 21, 1998

Representative Rick Hill

Re: Sun Road reconstruction

Dear Mr. Hill,

I feel strongly that there should be a HUGE PUSH to influence the National Park Service to allow road construction at night. Closing the Going-to-the-Sun Road from 7 P.M. to 7 A.M. would minimize the impact it will have on all the businesses in the Flathead. I also believe that critical areas of the road should be redone first on a priority basis and pave the rest.

We have heard from our guests all summer that working at night is status quo around the country—why not here?

Thanks for listening.

Sincerely,



Dee Brown
Canyon RV & Campground
Box 7
Hungry Horse, MT 59919
phone: 387-9393
fax: 387-9394

The above letter was submitted at the meeting in Kalispell to Congressman Hill. I felt there were many good testimonies and would like to add the following:

1. Take the Sun Road Reconstruction out of the management plan for Glacier National Park. We cannot 'manage' a road, but can the people who drive on it.
2. Include a compensatory rate for mitigating the businesses effected by the closure if that should happen.
3. Have an advisory group in place with local representation for businesses, government, etc.
4. Although Mr. Mihalic agreed to work with the public on listening to our concerns, there was no consultation on the management plan until after the plan was written! Isn't this a backward approach?
5. Get outside expertise on this road. To have landscape architects from GNP planning what's going to happen is ludicrous!



GLACIER PARK SUPER 8

7336 Highway 2 East • Columbia Falls, Montana 59912
Phone (406) 892-0888 or 1-800-800-8000 • Fax (406) 892-8808

SEPTEMBER 28, 1998

CONGRESSMAN RICK HILL
33 SOUTH LAST CHANCE GULCH
SUITE 2 C
HELENA, MONTANA 59601
406-443-7878
FAX 406-449-3736

DEAR REP. HILL,

MY HUSBAND, LARRY STREETER BUILT THE GLACIER PARK SUPER 8 IN COLUMBIA HEIGHTS IN 1995 AND OPENED IN NOVEMBER OF 95. 80% OF OUR YEAR IS FROM JUNE THROUGH SEPTEMBER WHICH IS THE TOURIST SEASON. 95% OF THIS IS TOURIST GOING TO GLACIER NATIONAL PARK.

SINCE MY HUSBAND WAS MURDERED ON CHRISTMAS NIGHT, 1997 I HAVE TAKEN OVER RUNNING THE MOTEL 100% WHICH I USED TO RUN WITH HIM. I AM VERY CONCERNED ON THE IMPACT THE SUGGESTED PLAN TO CLOSE THE PARK AND OTHER ALTERNATIVE PLANS WOULD HAVE ON MY MOTEL.

I DEPEND ON THE FEW SUMMER MONTHS TO CARRY THE MOTEL THE WHOLE YEAR. IF THIS REVENUE WERE LOST NEEDLESS TO SAY THE MOTEL COULD NOT SURVIVE.

I AM SURE THIS ALSO IS TRUE FOR MANY OF THE BUSINESSES. THE STUDIES THAT WERE DONE IT SEEMS TO ME ARE VERY INACCURATE AS I WAS NEVER CONTACTED FOR INPUT AND I HAVE NOT HEARD OF OTHERS THAT WERE EITHER.

I AM SURE IT IS NOT THE INTENT TO DAMAGE THE LOCAL BUSINESSES THAT DEPEND ON THE PARK FOR SURVIVAL AND CLOSE THEM. I AM ALSO VERY AWARE OF THE CONDITION OF THE ROAD. THERE HAS TO BE A WAY TO ACCOMPLISH THIS PROJECT AND NOT DESTROY THE BUSINESSES THAT SURROUND THE PARK NOT TO MENTION THE OUT REACH TO KALISPELL, BIGFORK AND WHITEFISH AND EVEN FURTHER THE PARK ALSO PLAYS.

I AM ALSO VERY CONCERNED ON THE NEGATIVE IMPACT THAT THE REPORTING ON THIS ISSUE IN THE MEDIA IS ALREADY PLAYING. IT IS VERY ALARMING TO HEAR THE GUESTS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD COME IN AND SAY "SO THEY ARE GOING TO CLOSE THE PARK." NEEDLESS TO SAY WE ARE TRYING TO ASSURE THEM THAT THIS WON'T HAPPENED AND THEY ARE WORKING ON A PLAN AND SEND OUT A POSITIVE RATHER THAN A NEGATIVE.

SINCERELY,
SERENA STREETER, OWNER
GLACIER PARK SUPER 8 MOTEL

Spa • Hot/yeoman Swiss • Deluxe Continental Breakfast • Kitchentini • Jacuzzis • Meeting Room • Large Truck & Bus Parking

