

## 2007 BUDGET BOONDOGGLE AWARD WINNER # 1

### THE “FERRY TO NOWHERE” (\$20 Million)

---

- This earmark will pay for a ferry to connect Anchorage with Port MacKenzie on the rural Alaskan peninsula of Matanuska-Susitna Borough – ostensibly to test, for the Navy, how well the vessel could cut through ice. The ferry connects the same route as one of the celebrated, and previously abandoned, “Bridges to Nowhere.”
- The ferry will reduce an approximately 2-hour drive to a trip of around 30 minutes – for the benefit of the *40 people* who are employed on the peninsula.
- The Office of Naval Research [ONR] did not request the funding and had actually rejected a similar proposal, saying that the project was not a high priority.
- Despite the Navy’s rejection, this earmark received \$20 million in this year’s DOD Appropriations bill, on top of nearly \$50 million that was included for this project in appropriations bills between 2002 and 2006.
- To make the ferry more “appropriate” for the Defense Appropriations bill, it was dubbed “an expeditionary craft” by the Ranking Member of the Senate Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. Most proponents acknowledge, however, that it will ultimately be used as a commercial ferry.
- In a time of war and deficit spending, this earmark begs the question: when did the Navy – already fully committed to the Global War on Terrorism – begin building commercial ferries?

