



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

April 17, 2008

Kathryn Kusske Floyd, Esq.
Mayer Brown LLP
1909 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20006

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 35095, The Alaska Railroad Corporation – Petition for Exemption to Construct and Operate a Rail Line Extension to Port Mackenzie, Alaska

Dear Ms. Floyd:

Consistent with 40 CFR 1506.5(a), we would like to request information regarding the proposed Port Mackenzie Rail Extension for the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) being prepared by the Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA). During SEA's scoping process for the EIS, several questions or suggestions were made about the feasibility of various alignments and features. In order to respond to these comments and suggestions, we are requesting information on the feasibility or infeasibility of various potential new alignments and features, as follows:

1. In the northern portion of the proposed Willow segment alignment (segment titles taken from the January, 2008 Preliminary Environmental and Alternatives Report), what is the feasibility of avoiding the Willow Creek State Recreation Area (SRA) by following the southern boundary of the SRA and connecting to the existing mainline between approximately Mileposts 186 and 187?
2. For the proposed Willow segment alignment, what is the feasibility of avoiding the Nancy Lake SRA between approximately Mileposts W12.8 and W13.8 (mileposts designated in the January, 2008 Conceptual Plan Set for the Preliminary Environmental and Alternatives Report), by shifting the alignment west?
3. In the eastern portion of the study area, east of the Big Lake segment alignment, what is the feasibility of an alignment that would be located in parts or all of the existing Port Mackenzie Road and Knik Goose Bay Road corridors?
4. For the Mac West segment alignment from Milepost MW5.2 north to the end of the segment, what is the feasibility of adjusting the route to avoid the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge (SGR)?

5. In the northern portion of the Big Lake segment alignment, what is the feasibility of shifting the alignment to the east such that it would connect with the existing mainline between approximately Mileposts 166 and 168 and avoid a proposed grade-separated crossing of Big Lake Road and development in the area?
6. What is the feasibility of "straightening" the Big Lake segment alignment with the objective of reducing impacts with a shorter segment, especially between Mileposts B5.9 and B8.4?
7. In the northern portion of the Houston North segment alignment between Milepost HN3.5 and the existing mainline, what is the feasibility of adjusting this alignment to the west to reduce impacts to the Little Susitna Recreation River area, and connecting to the existing mainline at approximately Milepost 180?

Thank you for your assistance. In addition to Dave Navecky of my staff, please provide a copy of your response to Mr. Alan Summerville of ICF International, our independent third-party contractor at 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031. Please feel free to contact Dave Navecky at 202-245-0294 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson" with a stylized flourish at the end.

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis