

Appendix A – Oral Comments on Draft EIS

A – Oral Comments on Draft EIS

Appendix A contains all oral comments received on the Draft EIS at the four public meetings.

- Fairbanks Public Meeting: Monday, January 12, 2009 (Comment Numbers 78 through 83 and Comment Number 120)
- North Pole Public Meeting: Tuesday, January 13, 2009 (Comment Numbers 84 through 93 and Comment Number 127)
- Salcha Public Meeting: Wednesday, January 14, 2009 (Comment Numbers 94 through 114)
- Delta Junction Public Meeting: Thursday, January 15, 2009 (Comment Numbers 115 through 118)

January 12, 2009	Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	1	2
1	SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD	1	PROCEEDINGS
2	TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC MEETING	2	MR. NAVECKY: Good evening, ladies and
3	DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT	3	gentlemen. Thank you for attending tonight's public meeting on
4	FOR THE ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION'S	4	the Draft Environmental Impact Statement for the Alaska
5	PROPOSED NORTHERN RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT	5	Railroad's Proposed Northern Rail Extension Project. I'd like
6	FINANCE DOCKET 35095	6	to officially open this evening's meeting.
7		7	My name is Dave Navecky. I'm with the Surface
8		8	Transportation Board out of Washington D.C. I'm in the
9	Fairbanks, Alaska	9	agency's Section of Environmental Analysis for SEA, or S-E-A
10	January 12, 2009	10	we're sometimes referred to. The board is the federal agency
11	5:00 p.m.	11	responsible for granting authority for the construction and
12		12	operation of rail line construction projects.
13		13	In July of 2007, the applicant, the Alaska
14		14	Railroad Corporation, filed a petition with the Surface
15		15	Transportation Board to construct and operate a rail line
16		16	extension, which would run from approximately North Pole down
17		17	to the city of Delta Junction, Alaska.
18	APPEARANCES:	18	SEA is the lead agency in preparing this
19	Mr. Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board	19	Environmental Impact Statement to identify and evaluate the
20	Mr. Don Perrin, Alaska Department of Natural Resources	20	potential environmental impacts associated with the proposed
21	Mr. Matt Elfrand, ICF	21	construction and operation of the rail line. SEA is assisted
22	Mr. Dave Johnson, ICF	22	on this project by eight cooperating agencies.
23	Mr. Mike Nagy, ENTRIX	23	Those cooperating agencies include the Alaska
24		24	Department of Natural Resources, and we have a representative
25		25	here next to me on the table. Also the Alaskan Command, the

January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 354th Fighter Wing at Eielson Air Force Base, the U.S. Army 2 Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of Land Management, the United 3 States Coast Guard, and the Federal Railroad Administration and 4 the Federal Transit Administration. 5 If you have not already done so, I request that 6 everyone here in attendance sign our sign-in sheet, and you can 7 do that as you leave if you haven't done so. However, if you 8 would like to speak formally before us this evening, I request 9 that you sign in so we have record of everyone that will be 10 speaking. 11 We'll provide each person approximately five 12 minutes to speak initially. And then after we've gone through 13 the entire roster, if there's any other individual who would 14 like to return to the microphone and provide some additional 15 comments, we will invite you to do so at that time. 16 We will have -- we have a court reporter here 17 that will be transcribing all your comments, and they will all 18 be entered officially into the record. You're also free to 19 submit written comments in addition to any oral comments you 20 may provide to us this evening. You can do that through 21 comment forms we have over here at the table to my left. You 22 can submit those comments this evening, or you can take those 23 home with you and mail those in to us. You can also submit 24 comments to the Surface Transportation Board through our Web 25 site, and there are instructions on the comment form on where	January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 to go to submit those comments electronically to us. 2 Comments are due to us on February 2nd, 2009. 3 If you file electronically through our Web site, they'll be due 4 on the 2nd. If you are mailing comments to us, they only need 5 to be postmarked on the 2nd of February. 6 This meeting represents the next step in the 7 environmental review process that my agency and the cooperating 8 agencies are conducting for this project. Prior to preparing 9 the Draft EIS, which we distributed to approximately 1,700 10 parties in December, we conducted public scoping meetings to 11 listen to your questions and concerns about the project. 12 Through, that input that we received from the 13 public, as well as agencies, federal, state, and local agencies 14 in Alaska, assisted us in identifying the issues and analyses 15 that we needed to conduct for the Draft Environmental Impact 16 Statement, that information was reflected in the final scope of 17 study which we issued in April of 2008, and was carried forward 18 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which was, again, 19 issued in December of 2008. 20 The environmental review poster in your handout 21 also provides a summary of where we have gone in the process. 22 The next steps in the process, after this public comment 23 period, is that we will review all the comments, and we'll 24 address those comments in the Final Environmental Impact 25 Statement.
--	--

789e168-913b-4655-9562-3964946877e

3a5d7241-92d4-4f5e-a7b3-07a5e28e1574

January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
6 1 Transportation Board to construct and operate the rail line. 2 However, the railroad will still need a number of other 3 approvals and permits from other various state and federal 4 agencies, including our cooperating agencies on the Draft EIS. 5 That would include, for example, the permit 6 from the Corps of Engineers, approvals and permits from the 7 Alaska Department of Natural Resources, permits from the 8 U.S. Coast Guard for bridge crossings, things like that. So 9 our approval, if it would occur, is just one step in the 10 process before they could begin constructing the rail line. 11 That's all I have to offer at this point in 12 time. I'm going to let Don Perrin with the Alaska Department 13 of Natural Resources explain why he's sitting up here at the 14 table and, for example, not all the other cooperating agencies. 15 DNR has a special role in tonight's public meeting. 16 MR. PERRIN: Thanks, Dave. Again, I'm 17 Don Perrin with the Department of Natural Resources. As Dave 18 said, DNR is a cooperating agency with the Surface 19 Transportation Board on the development of the Environmental 20 Impact Statement. And we've been working with STP and the 21 railroad the past few years to try to identify environmental 22 and public access issues to be incorporated into the EIS. 23 In addition to being a cooperating agency, the 24 railroad -- the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the Department 25 of Natural Resources are also working to implement state law	5 1 The Final Environmental Impact Statement will 2 address those impacts, and it will also include our 3 recommendations to the Surface Transportation Board. Our 4 recommendations referring to the Section of Environmental 5 Analysis. It's a document that we prepare for the board to 6 identify the environmental impacts of the project, and the 7 concerns related to the project. We will also include in that 8 Final EIS recommendations to the board in the area of 9 mitigation to address the issues that we encounter during the 10 environmental review process. 11 After the Final EIS is issued, the board will 12 then make its decision based on the Draft EIS. The Final 13 Environmental Impact Statement and all your public comments 14 that were provided to us either orally or in writing, either 15 during the scoping phase or during the Draft Environmental 16 Impact Statement phase, that will all be in the record, and 17 that will be considered by the board in making our decision. 18 It's not until the board -- the board's 19 decision can occur in one of three areas. They can deny the 20 project, or they can approve the project, or they can approve 21 the project with conditions. The conditions referring back to, 22 for example, the mitigation measures that we will recommend 23 that the board adopt if they were to approve the project. 24 If the board approves the project, then the 25 railroad will then have the authority from the Surface

January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 that is entitled AS 42.40.460. The short title is the 2 Extension of the Alaska Railroad. That law was passed a few 3 years ago. And that allows for the railroad to describe a 4 corridor from the existing facilities to the Canadian border, 5 which they have done. 6 So the law specifically allows the railroad to 7 identify a 500-foot wide corridor -- transportation corridor of 8 which 200 feet of that corridor, 100 feet either side of the 9 centerline will be ultimately conveyed to the railroad upon 10 which time they begin construction of the rail line. 11 Once the railroad identifies all or part of the 12 route, and after consulting with the public, local and state 13 agencies, and other potentially affected parties, the 14 Department of Natural Resources needs to make a finding that 15 the location of the proposed new rail line minimizes adverse 16 effects on existing and potential rights of way, and on land 17 uses associated with the location and construction, operation 18 of the gas pipeline that is in a manner -- in the best interest 19 of the state. 20 The railroad has requested that DNR move 21 forward with reserving the corridor, based on two documents 22 that the railroad developed the past two years. One of which 23 is the Alternative Analysis Study completed in 2006, and the 24 Preferred Route Report, which they submitted to the Surface 25 Transportation Board in 2007. The DNR process for the	January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 preserving of the corridor would occur as a proposed decision 2 which would be issued to the public with a 30-day comment 3 period, and then DNR will get you a final decision. 4 As Dave said, the project will require numerous 5 other state and federal permits. For these public meetings, 6 DNR is primarily interested in hearing your comments, in 7 particular where you go in the Tanana Flats and how you cross 8 the river and how this project might affect your access. 9 So we've got a map set in the back of the room. 10 If, at some time during these meetings or after you testify, 11 you'd like to go back and look at the maps and draw on there 12 with a marker where you cross and where you go, we'd encourage 13 you to do so. We'll have a DNR representative back there to 14 help you, guide you through the maps, and so you can find the 15 locations of where you want lets us know where you go and where 16 you cross. That's what we're interested in. 17 And if you have any questions about the DNR 18 process and the state law, the extension of the Alaska 19 Railroad, please call the Division of Mining, Land, and Water 20 at 451-2740. That's all I have. Thanks. 21 MR. NAVECKY: Thanks, Don. I just wanted to 22 reiterate that tonight we're taking oral comments on the Draft 23 Environmental Impact Statement, but we also encourage you and 24 you have the option of providing written comments on the EIS. 25 Both are given equal weight there. We don't give any greater
---	--

January 12, 2009

Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

9

1 weight to whether someone took the effort to speak to us
2 publicly. The comments are all considered equally.
3 And what we'll do now, we'll call the
4 individuals in the order in which people signed up to speak.
5 You will have approximately five minutes, at least initially.
6 And once we've gone through the list, we'll provide folks an
7 opportunity to speak further if they would like to. When you
8 come up to the microphone, if you could state your name and
9 spell your last name so that the court reporter can make sure
10 that she records it accurately. The first person we'd like to
11 call is Jim Hill.

12 MR. HILL: I'm going to hold for now and go on
13 the written comments.

14 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Thank you.

15 MR. HILL: Or later on in the oral.

16 MR. NAVECKY: Next is Steve Vincent.

17 MR. VINCENT: My name is Steve Vincent. That's
18 V-i-n-c-e-n-t. I've got about 800 pages that I want to read
19 very slowly. Comments that I would like to make on this
20 actually address the five-mile Clear Water River as it's called
21 in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement. We know it as
22 five-mile Clear Creek.

23 The first thing is, is that the alternative 2
24 route, the Tanana Bridge, it shows blocking at the channel of
25 the Tanana with fill. This blocks the channel that is access

78-1

3647341-9264-4656-9703-07465681574

January 12, 2009

Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

10

1 to the mouth of Clear Creek that's been used historically since
2 properties were sold over there and people have been hunting
3 there by boat since they've been able to get up the creek.

4 To cut it off would dry the area up. Since it
5 runs through a mud flat, it would require dredging in order to
6 be able to get into the mouth of the creek to be able to gain
7 access for the property for summer use. There really isn't,
8 during the summer, any other access.

9 Now, during the wintertime -- let me back up a
10 little bit here. Also, grayling migrate annually in their
11 annual salmon runs up there. It's going to cut down access to
12 a certain degree for the fish getting back up into the
13 Clear Creek area.

14 In the wintertime access is generally done off
15 of the Tanana, and different people have different routes to
16 access their properties. There are approximately 40 properties
17 up there; about 18 or 19 have cabins or structures that are
18 used for tent platforms to put winter tents up on if necessary.

19 There haven't been any provisions -- or there
20 aren't any provisions in the Draft EIS to allow people to cross
21 the railroad, which would sit to the north of the property
22 south of the Tanana River. And it is noted in the Draft EIS
23 that a DNR public access -- I guess regulations behind public
24 access would be at odds with the Alaska Railroad as far as
25 being able to cross it.

78-1

3647341-9264-4656-9703-07465681574

January 12, 2009	Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 12, 2009	Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
78-1	1 In other words, there are trails there that 11 2 aren't defined, you have crossings that are at the very -- the 3 mouth of Clear Creek and up at the headwaters of Clear Creek. 4 There are several other trails in that area that are used to 5 access the cabins back in there. 6 Let me catch -- I didn't follow exactly the way 7 I wanted to here. There are a lot of areas in the flats 8 that -- and kind of dependent upon which alternatives that are 9 chosen that the access would be cut off for historical hunting 10 grounds in there. We feel that that needs to be addressed. 11 We couldn't find on the Draft EIS where a 12 construction camp or construction storage area, which was 13 initially noted, would be located in the area once the bridge 14 crosses over onto the south side of the Tanana. That could 15 have significant environmental impacts, and it's something that 16 we feel should have been contained in the Draft EIS. 17 Clear Creek is used by both jet boats and air 18 boats. The bridges would have to have adequate clearance for 19 the taller air boats. There's no talk about construction 20 closures on the creek or how they would notify people when they 21 went through construction closures. 22 There's a notation in there of no noise or 23 vibration analysis is included for this area as there are no 24 receptors identified near the proposed rail line. Well, I 25 would guess that the people that have cabins over there would	78-4	1 beg to differ, their ears act as relatively good receptors. So 12 2 there should be some analysis on how noise is going to affect 3 the area over there, and how the vibration is going to affect. 4 I guess there could possibly be some problems in the salmon 5 spawning streams. 6 Clear Creek, five-mile Clear Creek was 7 identified as a salmon spawning stream. There are several 8 little connecting streams that come off of a slough that's 9 about three -- or about probably half way up of what's 10 considered to be five-mile Clear Creek on the map. It's 11 actually a slough of the Tanana. Those clear streams also have 12 salmon runs in them, and that isn't identified in the 13 Draft EIS.
78-2		78-5	14 And I think that about covers it. Did I get 15 everything? Okay. All right. I think that concludes my 16 comments for now. I thank you very much. 17 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. 18 MR. VINCENT: Here's a.... 19 MR. NAVECKY: Is your name on there? Thank 20 you. Next is Ken Severin. 21 MR. SEVERIN: Close enough. 22 MR. NAVECKY: And I apologize if I mispronounce 23 names this evening. 24 MR. SEVERIN: Okay. Yeah, it's Ken Severin, 25 S-e-v-e-r-i-n. And, yeah, I own approximately 87 acres at the
78-3		78-1	
78-4			

30547341-9204-4956-9703-07#62861574

3-547341-5204-465-a703-07a52b1574

3-547341-5204-465-a703-07a52b1574

January 12, 2009	Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
79-1	1 confluence of the Salcha and the Tanana, so on the south bank 2 of the Salcha and about as far west as you can drive. In my 3 written statement I'll give you the exact tax lots and so on 4 and so forth. I don't have any structures on the land, and I 5 don't intend to build there, but I do use it for hunting and 6 camping and just goofing off. 7 I'm definitely in favor of the Salcha 1 as 8 opposed to the Salcha, and I don't have any comments on any 9 other parts of the EIS. From a personal level, Salcha 2 would 10 essentially go right through my place and it would destroy it. 11 On a practical level, Salcha 2, in general, is going to go 12 through a lot more private land than Salcha 1. And it's going 13 to cause all kinds of private land ownership problems. 14 Probably the most important thing, and I think 15 it was touched on by the last speaker, is that Salcha 2 is 16 going to impact a lot of the salmon spawning grounds in the 17 Tanana down at the crossing by Flag Hill. And it's certainly 18 easy to say that we got lots of salmon resources and disturbing 19 a bit of habitat isn't going to make a lot of difference, but 20 it's exactly that kind of thinking that's led to the 21 destruction of salmon habitat in Europe, in England, 22 New England, the Pacific Northwest. And we got a chance to do 23 it right, so I think it's something that needs to be 24 considered. Thanks. 25 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Next is Miles Tucker.
80-1	1 Is that correct? 2 MR. TINKER: Not too close, but I'll straighten 3 you out. 4 MR. NAVECKY: I apologize. 5 MR. TINKER: My name is Mike Tinker, and I 6 came..... 7 MR. NAVECKY: Oh, Mike. I'm sorry. 8 MR. TINKER: That's all right. You're not the 9 first that's ever done that. And I came tonight to represent 10 the Fairbanks Fish & Game Advisory Committee. A unit that's 11 empowered under Alaska Statute 16.05 to comment on plans like 12 this for the community as regard to our goals and objectives 13 for the area that we represent by delegation from the Alaska 14 Board of Game. 15 In this case we're more concerned with the area 16 on the south side of the Tanana River which we know as 17 Game Management Unit 20, Subunit Alpha. And the reason for 18 that is that the Eielson farm country and the Salcha country is 19 where you deal more with private real estate. And when you get 20 on the south side, you're into resources that are more commonly 21 used by literally thousands of our constituents. 22 One of the issues that we'd like to make sure 23 that is in -- and I will apologize for not having read every 24 word in the EIS. I will try to do that and make some more 25 written comments -- is that as you line up for trails, and you

January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	
16 1 enough up in the air that you can pass underneath. 2 On a personal note, but I would put it in for 3 the advisory committee, I think it's absolutely foolish for the 4 National Railroad, the Alaska Railroad folks, or the Surface 5 Transportation people to put in a document something that 6 people will not do. And what you have said is here is we're 7 not going to let people cross this track between here and 8 there, and you've gone 30 miles. 9 That is absolutely absurd. There isn't a 10 railroad track in the United States, there's certainly not one 11 in Alaska, that people don't come up to on their snow machine, 12 ATV, that kind of thing, especially a tired vehicle, look 13 across, look up and down the track and go across. You want to 14 find 50 of them between here and Nenana, let's go out tomorrow. 15 You shouldn't be saying things like that in here because you 16 don't have an army to enforce things like that. 17 So hopefully what I'm saying here is that you 18 will keep open the option through design of getting some of 19 these issues that you don't catch that this stays across the 20 track, and that you hold open the option for even some minor 21 alignment adjustments to try to deal with some of these special 22 issues like the Clear Water. 23 And if I'm right, Clear Water down there is an 24 area where the railroad can be a good neighbor by moving a 25 little bit. Now, whether or not you've taken that into	15 1 have some places where you are crossing areas where there are 2 historic trails -- I don't mean historic in the recognized 3 sense of natural history, I mean historic in that Alaska's 4 trails are kind of special, and they have some special legal 5 ramifications going back to some early 1800s national 6 legislation that allows trails to be there. 7 And they are not trails put in by you and I on 8 hiking day, we're taking our four-wheeler or something like 9 that. They were put in, most of them, with a D8 bulldozer to 10 support mining and resource extraction from south of the river. 11 Those trails, as long as they fit into certain time categories, 12 can be used at the present time by those types of uses and 13 vehicles that they were originally constructed for. So if you 14 put your railroad track out there and I come along with my D8, 15 I'm going to walk across, because I can back that up that I 16 have the right to do that. 17 We would like to see the options for some of 18 your crossings and whatnot stay open through the design phase, 19 because, as Mr. Vincent said, one of the uses over there is by 20 our waterborne cadre that go over there to hunt and for 21 recreational purposes, and they go by boat. Yet we don't 22 really have anything that shows us drainage by drainage, 23 structure by structure, how the clearance will be affected by 24 the craft and vehicles using them. Obviously some ATVs could 25 take advantage of that, too, as long as your alignment is far
80-1	80-1
80-2	80-2

3d5d73d1-92d4-465d-a703-07d62b1574

3d5d73d1-92d4-465d-a703-07d62b1574

January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 80-2 17 1 consideration at this point as a constraint, in other words, to 2 say hey, there's quite a few people there, can we move a 3 quarter of a mile, a half a mile, stay on the same type of real 4 estate and help them or not? But those are questions that you 5 should deal with. Because if you can be a better neighbor, 6 then you should be a better neighbor. 7 And lastly, I'd like to say that we'd like to 8 make a pitch that not -- or that you encourage in the typical 9 exception something rather than a linear clearing. In other 10 words, that you use some sinuosity, that you push back off the 11 tracks things that were not done on the original 12 Alaska Highway -- or Alaska Railroad that now kill us thousands 13 of moose because of the fact that they are crammed up in the 14 better vegetation that grows in the vegetation control along 15 the railroad. 16 And that could easily be changed by having some 17 sinuosity to the right of way pushing back to the full 200 feet 18 or 100 feet, or whatever it is in some areas, and leaving it 19 closer in others so that this particular use of the railroad 20 over time does not become a serious wildlife problem for them 21 getting across, too. 22 And we will make some written comments to help, 23 but I don't want to say anything here that says we don't build 24 a railroad. I think building a railroad is a wonderful idea, 25 giving us transportation options and that kind of thing. We	January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 18 1 just don't want to see it be a negative impact on our 2 lifestyle, unless in those few places where you absolutely have 3 to do so. And I thank you for the opportunity. And as I say, 4 we'll put written comments in. 5 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. I might note that 6 we're getting some comments where it's going to be useful for 7 us to have a specific marking on a map, as Don was referring 8 to do so. And to do that, if you need to tear out pages of 9 your EIS and mark it up and include that with your written 10 comments that you mail in to us, I would encourage you to do 11 that also. Or photocopies, whatever you would like to do. The 12 next individual is Willie Homsly (ph). 13 MR. HAMSLEY: I'm Willie Hamsley. That's who 14 you called, wasn't it? 15 MR. NAVECKY: Yes. 16 MR. HAMSLEY: Okay. 17 MR. NAVECKY: Can you spell your last name, 18 please. 19 MR. HAMSLEY: H-a-m-s-l-e-y. 20 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. 21 MR. HAMSLEY: I've owned property over there in 22 that area of five-mile Clear Creek for, well, 25 years now. 23 And, of course, I have friends that's had cabins over there for 24 35, 40 years. There's some cabins that was built there by 25 Mr. Cook -- by a Mr. Cook and a Mr. Price back in the forties 34547341-9204-4656-9703-074656b1574
January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 80-3 17 1 consideration at this point as a constraint, in other words, to 2 say hey, there's quite a few people there, can we move a 3 quarter of a mile, a half a mile, stay on the same type of real 4 estate and help them or not? But those are questions that you 5 should deal with. Because if you can be a better neighbor, 6 then you should be a better neighbor. 7 And lastly, I'd like to say that we'd like to 8 make a pitch that not -- or that you encourage in the typical 9 exception something rather than a linear clearing. In other 10 words, that you use some sinuosity, that you push back off the 11 tracks things that were not done on the original 12 Alaska Highway -- or Alaska Railroad that now kill us thousands 13 of moose because of the fact that they are crammed up in the 14 better vegetation that grows in the vegetation control along 15 the railroad. 16 And that could easily be changed by having some 17 sinuosity to the right of way pushing back to the full 200 feet 18 or 100 feet, or whatever it is in some areas, and leaving it 19 closer in others so that this particular use of the railroad 20 over time does not become a serious wildlife problem for them 21 getting across, too. 22 And we will make some written comments to help, 23 but I don't want to say anything here that says we don't build 24 a railroad. I think building a railroad is a wonderful idea, 25 giving us transportation options and that kind of thing. We	January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 18 1 just don't want to see it be a negative impact on our 2 lifestyle, unless in those few places where you absolutely have 3 to do so. And I thank you for the opportunity. And as I say, 4 we'll put written comments in. 5 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. I might note that 6 we're getting some comments where it's going to be useful for 7 us to have a specific marking on a map, as Don was referring 8 to do so. And to do that, if you need to tear out pages of 9 your EIS and mark it up and include that with your written 10 comments that you mail in to us, I would encourage you to do 11 that also. Or photocopies, whatever you would like to do. The 12 next individual is Willie Homsly (ph). 13 MR. HAMSLEY: I'm Willie Hamsley. That's who 14 you called, wasn't it? 15 MR. NAVECKY: Yes. 16 MR. HAMSLEY: Okay. 17 MR. NAVECKY: Can you spell your last name, 18 please. 19 MR. HAMSLEY: H-a-m-s-l-e-y. 20 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. 21 MR. HAMSLEY: I've owned property over there in 22 that area of five-mile Clear Creek for, well, 25 years now. 23 And, of course, I have friends that's had cabins over there for 24 35, 40 years. There's some cabins that was built there by 25 Mr. Cook -- by a Mr. Cook and a Mr. Price back in the forties 34547341-9204-4656-9703-074656b1574

January 12, 2009

Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 and was used for trapping. 19

2 Anyway, I'll make mine short. I'm concerned
3 about the one slough that you're talking about blocking, which
4 Mr. Vincent brought up there. And I am concerned about
5 accessing the property if they stop that flow of that water. I
6 don't think they should plug up any place where the water runs,
7 you know, all summer. And sometimes when the Tanana rises, it
8 brings the dirty water also down that slough, you know, which
9 helps a lot.

81-1

10 But then in the fall when it kind of stops
11 running, there's still clear water running through there, and
12 it helps the boaters get in and out after the hunting season is
13 over, you know, because the water really drops down. So that's
14 more or less what I'm concerned about there, is the access to
15 the property. I have 14 acres over there and a cabin, and I
16 would sure like to continue having access to it. So that's
17 really about all I have to say.

18 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Well, thank you for your
19 comments.

20 MR. HAMSLEY: Okay.

21 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. That's the extent of the
22 individuals that had signed up to speak. Is there anyone that
23 has not spoken that would like to make some oral comments
24 before we give the original commenters another opportunity?
25 Sir? And please give your name and spell your last name for

33547341-9204-4656-9703-07a6b2b1574

January 12, 2009

Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 us. 20

2 MR. BEGET: Sure. My name is Jim Beget. It's
3 spelled B-e-g-e-t. I'm another private property owner, I
4 guess, with land in the area. My land is near the
5 Salcha-Tanana convergence, so again, I -- you know, people have
6 said this, but I prefer the first option that crosses the
7 Tanana River, because there's much less impact, I think, on the
8 areas that are most easily accessed for recreation, people have
9 private ownership in those areas.

10 So that's really all I wanted to say. I think
11 that the first option is preferable. I guess I would add to
12 that that I think for environmental reasons, also, that it's
13 preferable because the Salcha is really a unique river system.
14 It's really the only, you know, relatively unmodified river
15 that comes out of the Interior that's a clear water stream.

16 And I think the idea of crossing that with a
17 Tanana River bridge or with a Salcha River bridge with the
18 railroad is something that could be damaging to the
19 Salcha River watershed, and I'd rather see on the other side of
20 the river, other side of the Tanana.

21 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Thank you for your
22 comments. Yes, sir.

23 MR. WILBUR: I'm Roy Wilbur (ph). I have
24 property on the Salcha, the lower Salcha. I got 56 acres
25 there. I've been told, I can't tell you as a fact, but they

83-1

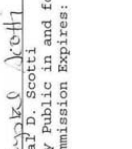
33547341-9204-4656-9703-07a6b2b1574

January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 say the Salcha is one of the biggest salmon runs, in the 2 Interior anyway. The majority of your salmon are spawned in 3 the Salcha River. And you should think about doing it across 4 the Salcha where you -- and all the private property owners on 5 the Salcha area you're going to have to contend with, where you 6 don't have it across the Tanana. 7 And I'm sure you've been talking to the Fish & 8 Game about the salmon runs, but there's -- one of the biggest 9 salmon runs is on the Salcha you got to contend with. And I 10 propose that you do it on the other side of the Tanana. 11 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Anyone else that 12 hasn't had a chance to speak would like to come up? All right. 13 Any of the original commenters that have been up already, do 14 you wish to come back and provide additional comment for us? 15 MR. VINCENT: What if we have a question? 16 MR. NAVECKY: I can answer questions on the 17 process, I can't answer questions on technical content. If 18 it's a question that we haven't addressed in the EIS, then 19 we'll take that as a comment and we'll ensure that it's 20 addressed in the Final EIS as well. 21 MR. VINCENT: Okay. I guess what I wanted to 22 mention here is that.... 23 MR. NAVECKY: Can I have your name, please. 24 MR. VINCENT: Oh, Steve Vincent again. Only 25 like a little bit of a paragraph, not 800 pages this time, 83-1	
January 12, 2009 Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 thought. What I was talking about earlier that the goals of 2 ARRC, I guess, for vehicular and nonvehicular crossings for the 3 railroad, since they're at odds with the ADNR mandates for 4 access, I'm wondering why the EIS didn't have any tentative 5 plans to resolve this when it was put out. 6 Or I guess what's going on in the back of my 7 mind at this point, if there aren't any tentative plans for 8 resolution for this, does that mean that we're looking at 9 modifications of the ADNR mandates to fit in with the Alaska 10 Railroad structure for access? 11 In other words, are we going to find ourselves 12 in a special situation where there won't be access through the 13 flats because of modification to the current standings of laws 14 or proposed legislation for that? 15 I want to make sure that that doesn't happen. 16 I think it sets a -- I think it would set a baseline that would 17 be pretty difficult for the general public to overcome in the 18 future. So I just want to make sure that there's no underlying 19 reasons for that not being commented on in the Draft EIS. 20 That's all I got, thanks. 21 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Anyone else? Okay. 22 Any questions on submitting written comments or where to submit 23 them or how to submit them? Last chance. Okay. Well, thank 24 you very much for coming this evening. 25 (END OF PROCEEDINGS) 120-1	

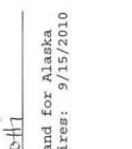
January 12, 2009	Fairbanks Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 13, 2009	North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1	23	1	1
2	C E R T I F I C A T E	2	SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
3	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) ss.	3	TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC MEETING
4	STATE OF ALASKA)	4	DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
5	I, Crystal D. Scotti, Notary Public in and for the	5	FOR THE ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION'S
6	State of Alaska, residing at North Pole, Alaska, and electronic	6	PROPOSED NORTHERN RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT
7	reporter for Liz D'Amour & Associates, Inc., do hereby certify:	7	FINANCE DOCKET 35095
8	That the annexed and foregoing Public Meeting was taken	8	
9	before me on the 12th day of January 2009, beginning at the	9	North Pole, Alaska
10	hour of 5:00 p.m., at Pike's Waterfront Lodge, 1850 Hoselton	10	January 13, 2009
11	Road, Fairbanks, Alaska;	11	5:00 p.m.
12	That this meeting, as heretofore annexed, is a true and	12	
13	correct transcription of the testimony of all parties, taken by	13	
14	me and thereafter transcribed by me;	14	
15	That the transcript has been retained by me for the	15	
16	purpose of filing the same with Ms. Melissa Elefante DuMond,	16	
17	Project Manager, ICF International, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax,	17	
18	Virginia 22031;	18	
19	That I am not a relative or employee or attorney or	19	
20	counsel of any of the parties, nor am I financially interested	20	
21	in this action.	21	
22	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and	22	
23	affixed my seal this 26th day of January 2009.	23	
24		24	
25		25	



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



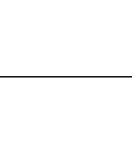
Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



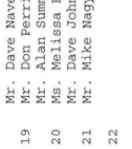
Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



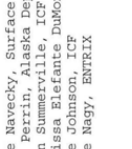
Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



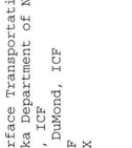
Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010

January 13, 2009

North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 come up to the front so everyone can hear you, and also the
2 microphones be able to pick your comments up.
3 Our interest there is that we have a court
4 reporter over to my right. She is going to be recording all
5 the comments, and transcripts of your comments will be provided
6 for the record. And those will be your -- any oral comments
7 you make tonight will be considered equally in any written
8 comments that you provide, if you provide oral comments
9 tonight, you can provide written comments, or you can just
10 provide written comments. It's all up to you and what you're
11 the most comfortable with.

12 Also, I wanted to mention to you that at the
13 table with me is Don Perrin with the Alaska Department of
14 Natural Resources. DNR was one of our cooperating agencies,
15 and they have an additional role in this project, and that role
16 is why DNR is present and also a cosponsor of tonight's public
17 meeting. And I'll let Don mention a few words about that.

18 MR. PERRIN: Sure, Dave. Thanks. As Dave
19 said, DNR is a cooperating agency with this NEPA document.

20 We've worked with the railroad and the STB and other agencies
21 to try to make sure that the document incorporates
22 environmental as well as access concerns that are relative to
23 DNR's authority and statutory responsibilities.

24 In addition to this NEPA process, there was
25 also a state law that was passed in 2004 that's entitled

e:\1095-4658-800-1\717260

January 13, 2009

North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 The Extension of the Alaska Railroad. And the title for that
2 is AS 42.40.460. That allows the railroad to basically
3 identify a 500-foot corridor, all or part of, between
4 North Pole, Delta Junction, and the Canadian border.

5 At which time they identify that, and at which
6 time DNR consult with potentially affected parties, including
7 the public and yourselves and other agencies, DNR will make a
8 finding that the proposed location of the corridor minimizes
9 adverse impacts on existing rights of way, trails, and uses and
10 construction associated with the gas pipeline.

11 So in addition to this process, DNR will also
12 be issuing a public notice for this reservation and conveyance
13 of this transportation corridor. And that will occur sometime
14 between now and this summer, I would imagine. Roughly so.
15 We'll notify the public when that happens.

16 So the railroad has identified this corridor,
17 and they've asked DNR to reserve it. So we are now in the
18 process of consulting with potentially affected parties, which
19 is you folks and others that I identified. The basis of this
20 corridor is two documents that the railroad has prepared, which
21 is an alternative analysis study. And they prefer the route
22 report, which they submitted to the Surface Transportation
23 Board, that essentially identifies the corridor as here's where
24 we want to put the line.

25 What DNR will do is once we've consulted with

e:\1095-4658-800-1\717260

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 affected parties, we'll draft a proposed decision, issue that 2 with a public notice, and give you folks a chance to look at it 3 and comment back to us what your feelings are on that. And 4 that will be roughly a 30-day public notice. And then DNR will 5 look at the comments and issue a final decision reserving the 6 corridor for the railroad. 7 Obviously the project is going to require 8 numerous other state and federal permits, which aren't really 9 on the topic of today's discussion, but that will occur, at 10 which time the railroad applies for those. 11 So for these public meetings, DNR is very 12 interested in hearing your comments as to where you guys go, 13 where your places are, where you cross, when do you do it, and 14 what you use. Kind of a where, when, and how, you know, thing. 15 And for that we've got maps in the back room 16 there that AJ is holding up. And so if you get time and you 17 have the desire, please go back there and mark those maps up 18 with a marker that we have and let us know where you go so we 19 can document that and make sure that your access is minimally 20 impacted or not affected by this project. 21 I think that's all I have. If you guys have 22 questions for me or DNR, please feel free to approach me, and 23 also call the DNR office of Mining, Land and Water at 451-2740. 24 And that's all I have. Thank you. 25 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you, Don. In addition to	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 your -- we're here tonight to hear your comments on the 2 project, and I just wanted to point out where we are in our 3 process in the environmental review process. That's indicated 4 by the yellow star there on the poster board up front. 5 We started initially with what we refer to as a 6 scoping process. We were up here for a series of meetings, and 7 including meeting in this room. And during that scoping 8 process, we were soliciting your interest in the project, which 9 are what analyses we should look at, what type of impacts we 10 should review, what type of impacts were of concern to you. 11 Those comments were obtained from both residents, citizens, 12 people that recreate in the area. And we also solicited those 13 type of comments from local, federal, and state agencies. 14 And we used that information to prepare the 15 final scope of study for the Draft Environmental Impact 16 Statement, which was issued in April of 2008, and that helped 17 guide the development of the Draft EIS which you received in 18 December. 19 In tonight's meeting we're eager to obtain your 20 comments, in addition to Don pointed out, the interest in 21 access issues. We're interested in hearing comments, either 22 tonight orally or in your written comments, on all aspects of 23 the document, whether there are any preferences on routes, 24 comments, interest on the potential impacts. 25 And we're also eager to get your comments on
---	--

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 the proposed mitigation. There's a section in the document 2 where my section, SEA, has identified a fairly lengthy list of 3 mitigation measures that we would recommend be imposed on the 4 railroad if this project were to go forward. And if you have 5 suggestions on additional mitigation, changes in that 6 mitigation, we'd like to hear that as well. 7 At the end of the comment period on 8 February 2nd, we'll take all those comments, and we'll address 9 all those comments in the Final EIS. And in the Final EIS, in 10 addition to addressing your comments, my section, SEA again, 11 will identify a environmentally preferable route, and we will 12 also finalize our recommendations for mitigation on the 13 project. 14 And that Final EIS with all those 15 recommendations then goes to our three-member board. That's 16 the actual members that represent the Surface Transportation 17 Board. And it is those three members who will vote and make 18 the final decision on the railroad's request for the authority to 19 construct and operate the railroad. 20 And there are basically three avenues that the 21 board can go. They could deny the project, they could approve 22 the project, or they can approve the project with mitigation. 23 And assuming the board were to approve the project, that 24 authority is -- will be called permissive. It gives the 25 railroad the authority to construct and operate the railroad,	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 but it does not require them to do it. 2 It all depends on whether or not they have the 3 finances and everything else in order that they need to proceed 4 with construction and operation. And that includes, also, a 5 large handful of other state and local permits that they need 6 to obtain, including DNR's permits, permits from the 7 Corps of Engineers, from the U.S. Coast Guard. Approvals from 8 the U.S. Department of Defense, since the railroad, depending 9 on routes selected, would cross DOD lands. They'd need 10 approvals from FPA, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal 11 Transit Administration, and so forth and so on. 12 So even if our agency approves the project, 13 it's just one step in the process of proceeding with the 14 railroad. Yes, sir. 15 MR. DAVIES: Just a quick question. The 16 Surface Transportation Board, the route is probably our biggest 17 concern. Would that route change after the Transportation 18 Board makes a decision given all this additional permitting 19 process? 20 MR. NAVECKY: No. They would have to proceed 21 with the route -- if the board were to authorize the project, 22 they would have to proceed with the route that the board 23 authorizes. 24 And with that, we'll begin the oral comments 25 for those individuals that have signed up. Again, if you could
January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 the proposed mitigation. There's a section in the document 2 where my section, SEA, has identified a fairly lengthy list of 3 mitigation measures that we would recommend be imposed on the 4 railroad if this project were to go forward. And if you have 5 suggestions on additional mitigation, changes in that 6 mitigation, we'd like to hear that as well. 7 At the end of the comment period on 8 February 2nd, we'll take all those comments, and we'll address 9 all those comments in the Final EIS. And in the Final EIS, in 10 addition to addressing your comments, my section, SEA again, 11 will identify a environmentally preferable route, and we will 12 also finalize our recommendations for mitigation on the 13 project. 14 And that Final EIS with all those 15 recommendations then goes to our three-member board. That's 16 the actual members that represent the Surface Transportation 17 Board. And it is those three members who will vote and make 18 the final decision on the railroad's request for the authority to 19 construct and operate the railroad. 20 And there are basically three avenues that the 21 board can go. They could deny the project, they could approve 22 the project, or they can approve the project with mitigation. 23 And assuming the board were to approve the project, that 24 authority is -- will be called permissive. It gives the 25 railroad the authority to construct and operate the railroad,	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 but it does not require them to do it. 2 It all depends on whether or not they have the 3 finances and everything else in order that they need to proceed 4 with construction and operation. And that includes, also, a 5 large handful of other state and local permits that they need 6 to obtain, including DNR's permits, permits from the 7 Corps of Engineers, from the U.S. Coast Guard. Approvals from 8 the U.S. Department of Defense, since the railroad, depending 9 on routes selected, would cross DOD lands. They'd need 10 approvals from FPA, Federal Railroad Administration, Federal 11 Transit Administration, and so forth and so on. 12 So even if our agency approves the project, 13 it's just one step in the process of proceeding with the 14 railroad. Yes, sir. 15 MR. DAVIES: Just a quick question. The 16 Surface Transportation Board, the route is probably our biggest 17 concern. Would that route change after the Transportation 18 Board makes a decision given all this additional permitting 19 process? 20 MR. NAVECKY: No. They would have to proceed 21 with the route -- if the board were to authorize the project, 22 they would have to proceed with the route that the board 23 authorizes. 24 And with that, we'll begin the oral comments 25 for those individuals that have signed up. Again, if you could

January 13, 2009

North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 come to the front of the room. And before you start, if you
2 could state your name and spell your last name so that the
3 court reporter can get that on the recording and we can have an
4 accurate record of who was providing those comments.
5 And the first person signed up was
6 Jacques Etcheverry. I don't know if I pronounced -- I
7 apologize if I mispronounce names.
8 MR. ETCHEVERRY: Do you want me to spell my
9 last name or just.....
10 MR. NAVECKY: Yes, if you could, please.
11 MR. ETCHEVERRY: Jacques Etcheverry. Last name
12 E-t-c-h-e-v- -- as in Victor -- e-r-r-y.
13 MR. NAVECKY: I guess if -- this is the
14 microphone over here, right. You could probably just stand
15 over there, you don't have to -- kind of face us and the
16 audience if you'd like.

84-1

17 MR. ETCHEVERRY: Well, first off, is anybody
18 else Alaska Trappers Association member? Then I'm here with
19 you for them. Well, then I'll represent them too. I'm here to
20 plead with you guys to start looking at the Eielson 3 route for
21 the project, because -- well, the main concern is 1 and 2 go
22 right through my house, the first part of it. I mean, that's a
23 main concern.
24 Second is that you're going to be disrupting a
25 lot of the good farm land out there. I mean, a lot of people

e:\91066-4668-4668-800-1\7172db

January 13, 2009

North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 have their lives out there. Third is that there's a lot of
2 habitat. It's a grayling spawning area out there, all the
3 little tributaries off of the sloughs. Otters, minn, marten,
4 lynx, wolves. There's a lot of hunting going on out there. A
5 lot of people coming out fishing and stuff, Fourth of July.
6 I just think that going towards the highway
7 route would be less destructive to the community, and also it
8 would, you know, help put money into the pocket. You guys
9 could, you know, tally up the timber sales from all the wood.
10 It just -- it seems like a better route to me, not only because
11 I want to keep my home, but for you guys, too. Okay. That's
12 all I have to say. Okay.

84-1

13 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Next is Warren Smith.
14 MR. SMITH: My name is Warren Smith. I live on
15 the Eielson farm community. S-m-i-t-h. Again, I would like to
16 address the route in the Eielson 1, 2, 3 segments. I want to
17 go on record as supporting the segment 3, which is the
18 Alaska Railroad's preferred route, because of the disruption
19 that Eielson -- that the segment 2 and 1 create.

85-1

20 I would like to point out that I believe the
21 impacts to the farmland and the private property is more
22 extensive than what you came up with in your Draft EIS. And
23 that basically the Eielson 3 route, if that is selected, is a
24 route that I could support, and feel that it's the best one for
25 the whole project. Thank you.

e:\91066-4668-4668-800-1\7172db

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Stu Davies. 2 MR. DAVIES: Stu Davies, D-a-v-i-e-s. Before I 3 read my letter, I just have some random thoughts. I want to 4 thank the Surface Transportation Board for doing an extensive 5 EIS. I thought the summary was the EIS, and then I got to the 6 CD and found out that it was about 300 pages long. Lots of 7 maps and all that sort of stuff. 8 And I think you answered my first question 9 there, the one I asked in the back, that the only reason I'm 10 here is the concern over the route. And once that route is 11 decided, you know, I can jump behind the railroad sooner or 12 later, depending on the route that you pick. 13 I would really like to see some of our elected 14 officials here. Any assembly members here? Any legislators? 15 Okay. We got two assembly members. Good. And I did note that 16 Mr. Kennedy, who serves on the board, came up in 2006. Is that 17 his name? One of the Surface Transportation Board members? 18 Maybe I didn't get his name right, but I did see that one of 19 the board members did.... 20 MR. NAVECKY: Mr. Buttrey, perhaps? 21 MR. DAVIES: He came and reviewed the project 22 in 2006. I'm a farmer. My backyard is pretty -- probably a 23 bit smaller than the U.S. military's backyard, but it looks 24 like my backyard is one of the spots where you want to put a 25 railroad. e791d956-6658-46a8-bc88-b01174172ab	86-1
January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 I've argued with my friends and neighbors and 2 some of the other folks around here about minimizing the impact 3 to private property. Private property in the state of Alaska 4 is held in, what, less than 1 percent. And the railroad wants 5 to put a road -- or highway right down through the middle of a 6 small section of private property that we have here in the 7 North Star Borough. 8 So that was a concern. But I think I lost that 9 argument in terms of when I saw the maps and the routes and 10 that sort of thing. It really would have been nice to open up 11 that other side of the river and have no impact on private 12 property or farming. 13 So one of my messages was get across the river, 14 and you have decided to cross the river a lot sooner than at 15 the Flag Hill site. There appears to be broad support for the 16 railroad. I read pretty much all the comments that have been 17 written to you. The Whitestone Community must have had a 18 church meeting and had all their members sign a petition 19 encouraging and supporting the railroad. 20 Of course, the Borough Assembly is going to 21 support the railroad because of the potential of a levy that 22 would be built, which is found -- that levy information is 23 found in that CD if you turn it on -- in the back, and which 24 would really help the Salcha community, maybe, if it's done 25 right, to protect them from flooding. e791d956-6658-46a8-bc88-b01174172ab	13

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 86-2 1 are not opposed to the railroad, and hope this project will be 2 a continuation of a rail line into Canada and the Continental 3 United States. 4 The Alaska Railroad Corporation's preferred 5 route is Eielson alternative segment 3. We prefer this route 6 for the following reasons -- we also prefer that route. 7 Eielson alternative segment 3 would operate in an established 8 transportation and utility corridor. It's already there. This 9 includes the four-lane Richardson Highway, Golden Valley 10 Electric Association's high-voltage transmission line, 11 Alaska Railroad's spur through the Eielson Air Force Base, the 12 Old Richardson Highway, and the always active miles long runway 13 at Eielson Air Force Base. 14 That transportation and utility corridor is 15 already there. It prevents the establishment of a second 16 corridor. If you crown to the south of Piledriver Slough, 17 guess what, you got two transportation corridors now. And 18 that's Eielson alternative segment 1 and 2. If you stay up on 19 the highway, there's less impact to private property, and no 20 impact to farming. 21 There would be no greater environmental 22 impact -- I'm not an environmental expert, but as the existing 23 transportation and utility corridor already impacts the route, 24 it would continue to concentrate noise, vibration, and safety 25 issues in an established transportation and utility corridor.	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 86-2 1 So I just want to go ahead and read my letter 2 to you. And please consider the following comments to help the 3 Surface Transportation Board decide the best route for the 4 Alaska Railroad's corporation -- Alaska Railroad Corporation's 5 Northern Rail Extension Project from North Pole to 6 Delta Junction. 7 These comments refer only to the Eielson 8 alternative segments. My family and I are stakeholders in this 9 process, as our homes and farms lie along the path of Eielson 10 alternative segments 1 and 2. Naturally we oppose this 11 proposed route because of the negative impacts construction and 12 operation of the railroad would have to us and our rural 13 lifestyle. 14 A partial list of these negative impacts 15 include property devaluation, loss of income from farming, 16 restricted access to recreation -- fishing, hunting, trapping, 17 skiing, snow machining, you name it, dog sledding -- creation 18 of additional safety hazards, increased noise, vibration, loss 19 of visual aesthetics, loss of wildlife habitat, loss of flyway 20 habitat. My farm is a familiar stopping place for migrating 21 waterfowl in the spring and fall. The list could go on. 22 In short, this route will destroy our rural 23 lifestyle. We constructed our retirement home and our farm in 24 2003. We had no idea then that the Alaska Railroad would plan 25 a rail line literally in our backyard. On a positive note, we
January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 86-2 1 are not opposed to the railroad, and hope this project will be 2 a continuation of a rail line into Canada and the Continental 3 United States. 4 The Alaska Railroad Corporation's preferred 5 route is Eielson alternative segment 3. We prefer this route 6 for the following reasons -- we also prefer that route. 7 Eielson alternative segment 3 would operate in an established 8 transportation and utility corridor. It's already there. This 9 includes the four-lane Richardson Highway, Golden Valley 10 Electric Association's high-voltage transmission line, 11 Alaska Railroad's spur through the Eielson Air Force Base, the 12 Old Richardson Highway, and the always active miles long runway 13 at Eielson Air Force Base. 14 That transportation and utility corridor is 15 already there. It prevents the establishment of a second 16 corridor. If you crown to the south of Piledriver Slough, 17 guess what, you got two transportation corridors now. And 18 that's Eielson alternative segment 1 and 2. If you stay up on 19 the highway, there's less impact to private property, and no 20 impact to farming. 21 There would be no greater environmental 22 impact -- I'm not an environmental expert, but as the existing 23 transportation and utility corridor already impacts the route, 24 it would continue to concentrate noise, vibration, and safety 25 issues in an established transportation and utility corridor.	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 86-2 1 So I just want to go ahead and read my letter 2 to you. And please consider the following comments to help the 3 Surface Transportation Board decide the best route for the 4 Alaska Railroad's corporation -- Alaska Railroad Corporation's 5 Northern Rail Extension Project from North Pole to 6 Delta Junction. 7 These comments refer only to the Eielson 8 alternative segments. My family and I are stakeholders in this 9 process, as our homes and farms lie along the path of Eielson 10 alternative segments 1 and 2. Naturally we oppose this 11 proposed route because of the negative impacts construction and 12 operation of the railroad would have to us and our rural 13 lifestyle. 14 A partial list of these negative impacts 15 include property devaluation, loss of income from farming, 16 restricted access to recreation -- fishing, hunting, trapping, 17 skiing, snow machining, you name it, dog sledding -- creation 18 of additional safety hazards, increased noise, vibration, loss 19 of visual aesthetics, loss of wildlife habitat, loss of flyway 20 habitat. My farm is a familiar stopping place for migrating 21 waterfowl in the spring and fall. The list could go on. 22 In short, this route will destroy our rural 23 lifestyle. We constructed our retirement home and our farm in 24 2003. We had no idea then that the Alaska Railroad would plan 25 a rail line literally in our backyard. On a positive note, we

e:\1056-4668-4668-800\12\171726

e:\1056-4668-4668-800\12\171726

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	17 1 the railroad was going to be, but no, we're still here. We 2 hope that a decision can be made by the board sooner than 3 later. I hope you decide in our favor so that we can plan 4 farming activities without the cloud of impending loss. Thanks 5 for this opportunity. I would be happy to answer any questions 6 that you have. 7 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. 8 MR. DAVIES: You bet. 9 MR. NAVECKY: Next signed up is 10 Darcy Etcheverry. 11 MS. ETCHEVERRY: Darcy Etcheverry. It's the 12 same as his. Do you want me to spell it? 13 COURT REPORTER: No. 14 MS. ETCHEVERRY: Okay. I live at 4900 Eielson 15 Farm Road, and if segment 3 is chosen, like my husband said, it 16 would go right through our backyard. And I wanted to also 17 mention another of my favorite recreation pastimes is riding 18 horses. And I have the horses out at our property. And the 19 slough -- besides the farm, the slough behind our house is 20 the -- kind of the center of our home. 21 And we ride horses out there, we go floating 22 down it. We love to float down the slough. And we see 23 grayling and bald eagles. And we see all sorts of animals. 24 Oh, small -- they're coaching back there. So it's really a 25 beautiful place, and to have it locked in between the railroad
January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	16 1 Most of the south and west banks of Piledriver Slough would 2 remain in its natural state. It stays on military land until 3 it's connected with the Salcha segment. 4 A quick view of the routes, if you look on the 5 map, reveals that this segment is not only the preferred route, 6 but the most logical being straighter and shorter. Any 7 recreational impacts to this segment are outlined in 8 Alaska Railroad's required mitigation. Basically behind me and 9 between Eielson Air Force Base runway, that's Air Force Base 10 recreation area. It's a bow hunting area. There's fishing 11 over there. You have to have a permit from the Army to even 12 recreate there. 13 If you pick Eielson alternative segment 3, all 14 the negatives affecting our homes and property noted, that will 15 go away. In conclusion, my family, neighbors, and I hope that 16 the Surface Transportation Board will approve the railroad 17 corporation's preferred route, Eielson alternative segment 3. 18 The Alaska Farm Bureau and the Eielson farm 19 community oppose any loss of agricultural land as a result of 20 the construction of the rail line. We've been waiting a long 21 time, 2005 is really -- when he says the law was passed in 22 2004, they've been waiting since 2004. 23 Regarding a decision of the routing of the 24 railroad, we were under the impression that when this EIS came 25 out, that bang, a route would be there and we would know where

86-3

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 and the highway I think would be very detrimental to that area.¹⁸ 2 Thank you. 3 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. 4 Robin Davies. 5 MS. DAVIES: My name is Robin Davies, 6 D-a-v-i-e-s. And I think that you heard from my husband and my 7 daughter some of the stuff I wanted to talk about. But we 8 built our home in 2003. And I don't know if they mentioned, 9 but when we built our home, on the map was a railroad corridor, 10 but we never expected this, you know. 11 And then when this happened in 2005, we have 12 been dealing with it since then. And it is incredibly 13 nerve-racking. Now, we opened up your -- we opened up your 14 summary, and we're like, oh, we'll know something now. And 15 then it's like, no, we really don't, you know. 16 And then what I did was I went and took your 17 summary off of the summary table for Eielson 1, 2, and 3, and I 18 put it in a graph that was easier for me to compare the routes. 19 And I think there's some problems with some of these areas, so 20 I just want to talk about a couple. One would be -- the thing 21 that jumped out at me is that there's much more wetlands on the 22 preferred route 3, which makes me nervous, because you hear 23 about wetlands, you know. 24 And I don't know how to argue that very much, 25 because I don't know much about wetlands. And I read your CD,	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 and it's way too hard for me to understand. But this map here¹⁹ 2 that I got you, which shows -- I have penciled in our farm. 3 And the big farm would be ours. The red dot is our house. And 4 then the orange dot would be Darcy's house. 5 And then this green dot is a hazardous site. I 6 read last night where they talk about hazardous sites, and you 7 didn't say anywhere in the Eielson section. I don't know if 8 you knew about that one. It's supposed to be cleaned up next 9 summer, but I don't know what that means. It's an old military 10 site. 11 But it shows the wetlands, this is your wetland 12 map. And I think -- I'm just wondering how many of these 13 wetlands were made because of the construction of the highway, 14 you know. I think all of the lakes are gravel pits that were 15 dug for the highway. 16 And I'm thinking even down further south where 17 it really gets boggy, is that because it's boggy because the 18 highway was put in there? And if so, does that make a 19 difference if that's manmade wetlands? You know, versus if you 20 impact any wetlands on the other side of the slough, those are 21 all natural wetlands. 22 The biological resources, one thing I was 23 thinking about was we attract a lot of animals to the farm 24 area. The moose come in and graze on our fields, mice come in 25 and graze -- you know, eat the seeds and stuff, and -- which
88-1	88-2 88-3

January 13, 2009	North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	
88-4	January 13, 2009 1 brings in birds of prey. So they go back and forth to the 2 slough. 3 So now you're putting a railroad in between 4 where the moose like to graze and go down to the slough and 5 eat, too. So even though the numbers sound the same, I don't 6 think the impact would be the same. I think we have probably 7 more moose walking back and forth to the slough on the side of 8 Eielson 1 and 2. 9 The noise receptors, I don't completely 10 understand that, but what I do understand is that there's a lot 11 of noise in that area. You know, we've got the military jets 12 flying back and forth. So yes, the recreation area is going to 13 be impacted by noise. But to me, it's like it's already 14 impacted by noise. The jets are really loud there. So I don't 15 see why that makes a difference. 16 The land use, I don't understand how you came 17 up with how much land is affected. Last night I heard talk 18 about you needing to establish a 500-foot corridor. Now, I 19 don't know how far it is from our house to the slough, but I 20 don't think it's any further than 500 feet. So does that mean 21 the whole area? 22 You said something last night about 500 feet 23 needs to be designated for a corridor, and then only 200 feet 24 would be given to the railroad. But that means an additional 25 300 feet is sitting there for someone else to use, I assume,	20
88-5		January 13, 2009 1 right? 2 MR. PERRIN: I can clarify that, ma'am, if you 3 want. 4 MS. DAVIES: Okay. 5 MR. PERRIN: The law allows for the railroad to 6 basically draw out a 500-foot corridor, and at which time 7 they'd construct the rail and survey it, and then the state 8 needs to convey them just 200 feet, 100 feet either side of the 9 centerline. 10 MS. DAVIES: Okay. 11 MR. PERRIN: And then that additional 300 12 that's kind of left over, the state is still required to manage 13 that as a transportation corridor. 14 MS. DAVIES: So we could have more put in 15 there? 16 MR. NAVECKY: But that applies to the right of 17 way on state lands. 18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Only state land. 19 MR. PERRIN: Only state land, yeah, that's 20 right. 21 MS. DAVIES: Well, how about federal lands? 22 There's federal land behind us. 23 MR. PERRIN: The law doesn't apply to federal 24 land. 25 MS. DAVIES: Oh, okay. So it would just be 200
88-6		21

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 feet, then, behind us, which would be federal land? 2 3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It could be 500. 4 MS. DAVIES: Okay. It's something to think 5 about. But I don't know -- so when you're going through our 6 land, are you just taking a 200-foot swatch, and it doesn't 7 matter the impact? 8 Like, if you're taking two corners of our land, 9 does that mean all that corner is gone, or just 200 feet? Even 10 if there's only a little piece on there? It's something to 11 think about. I don't know how the 52 acres of private land 12 came into effect. 13 The two acres in agricultural use I'd really 14 argue because just going across our one -- the slough is really 15 close to that back corner of our lot. And you're going to 16 probably impact at least five acres just on our land. And then 17 when you cut straight through my daughter's, who knows how much 18 you would impact there. 19 So I can't understand where the two acres come 20 from, because further down you're bisecting some other ag land. 21 And it doesn't seem to matter to me if the ag land is not clear 22 or it's clear, it's still ag land, and our hope is still to 23 clear it someday. We have plans to do that. I think that's 24 all. I have a letter here, too, which will be my written 25 comment. Thank you. MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. And	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 maybe I'll just follow-up on what Don mentioned. The proposed 2 action that is for the Surface Transportation Board to decide 3 upon is for a 200-foot right of way for the construction and 4 operation of the rail line. That would be for the entire 5 length from North Pole down to Delta Junction. It was within 6 that 200-foot right of way that their common obligation would 7 come with any license we provide them to construct and operate 8 the rail line. 9 There's also the separate issue of the 500-foot 10 right of way associated with the state statute, which applies 11 only to state lands. The state law cannot mandate a 500-foot 12 right of way on federal property. 13 MS. DAVIES: Of course, if you've already got 14 the railroad there and there's part state land, then another 15 utility or transportation can probably go beside it. Would 16 probably do. I mean, you've already got 100 and.... 17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Can I ask where does Salcha 3 18 go? On this map it says 2 and 3 here, and then you get into 19 the dividing line, it goes down and it's Salcha 2 and Salcha 1, 20 but I see no Salcha 3. So where exactly are we talking about? 21 MR. NAVECKY: Which map are you on? 22 MS. DAVIES: This is Eielson. We're talking 23 about Eielson. 24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, well, I know it's down 25 there.
88-7	88-7

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 24 1 AUDIENCE MEMBER: There is no Salcha 3. 2 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh. 3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: There are just two 4 alternatives. 5 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Oh, there are only two? 6 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. 7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. Well, then where's the 8 3 they're talking about? 9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: We're talking about Eielson. 10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Eielson 3. 11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, I know, but on here, 12 what does it say on 3? 13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Could I ask a question, 14 please. When you're talking about taking this land, is there 15 some sort of a law that circumvents that ag land statute? 16 Say ag land is supposed to be subdivided by the 17 owner, if they want to, and they can only subdivide it no more 18 than four times, and no less than 40 acres in each parcel. And 19 we were in another meeting and we asked the man who was in 20 charge of that meeting about, what, two years ago? 21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah. 22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: And he said he didn't know 23 that that was ag land. He didn't know about the statutes, and 24 he'd have to look into it. So what I'm asking is if you take a 25 little piece of one of the farmer's land, can you just take a	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 25 1 little piece? Is there another law, a federal law, that 2 overrides the state law? 3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Supersedes. 4 MR. NAVECKY: Yeah, I don't know the answer to 5 that question, so if you can -- are you -- do you intend on 6 providing us written comments or.... 7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Well, it affects Davies' land 8 because it's ag land. 9 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. 10 AUDIENCE MEMBER: We all have ag land in the 11 Eielson farm.... 12 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. 13 AUDIENCE MEMBER:well, the farm parcels, 14 they're all fairly large, and they have these limitations on 15 time. 16 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Well, I would encourage 17 you to provide that question to us in writing to ensure that we 18 get it into the record, and.... 19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Did you consider that at all 20 when you were doing this? We're just doing the environmental 21 impact, is that correct? 22 MR. NAVECKY: Correct, yes. 23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So you're not concerned about 24 ownership of the land and how you can sell -- you know, I know 25 eminent domain, they used to do that for roads. Can they do
---	---

January 13, 2009	North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 13, 2009
26	1 that on this ag land, too? 2 MR. NAVECKY: If the board were to approve the 3 project, that would provide the railroad with the authority to 4 obtain the right of way under a condemnation, but they would 5 have to follow state laws in order to do that. Does that make 6 sense? 7 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Okay. 8 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Does DNR know about this? 9 MR. PERRIN: Yeah, we know about the ag land, 10 but the -- this 42, the extension of the Alaska Railroad 11 statute only applies to land in state ownership. So I believe 12 your land is under private ownership. 13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Their land is the one that's 14 being impacted, not mine, not ours. 15 MR. PERRIN: Yeah, we're.... 16 (Multiple voices) 17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: But it could be at some point 18 in the future. 19 AUDIENCE MEMBER: If you change your mind on 20 the route. 21 MR. PERRIN: Well, the law is very specific 22 about the corridor, and it kind of speaks to expeditiously 23 conveying that to the railroad. And there's another.... 24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: The state has to convey it to 25 the railroad? Is that what you're saying?	1 MR. PERRIN: Once they begin construction to 2 it, yeah. Be it the title -- fee simple, yeah. 3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: But it's not fee simple now. 4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: It's not fee simple. 5 MR. PERRIN: They will -- we will convey 6 ownership of the land to the railroad at which time they 7 construct. Until they construct, we still retain management of 8 the land. 9 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So DNR can only give state 10 property to the railroad? 11 MR. PERRIN: That's correct. 12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: But not agricultural land 13 that people own? 14 MR. PERRIN: That's my understanding. 15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Like they -- like Mr. and 16 Mrs. Davies? 17 MR. PERRIN: Right. 18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: They have agricultural land. 19 MR. PERRIN: Right. 20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: They would have to.... 21 MR. NAVECKY: Yeah. I'd like to -- we have 22 another person signed up to speak, and then it sounds like we 23 have a number of questions that we'd like to address; we would 24 break up the meeting and we can answer those question 25 informally if we could then. The next person is	e7's (095-4602-4048-508-806) 1/17/2009
d483d4d5-ea64-419a-8d92-0f58b274d500			

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 Bonnie Woldstad. 2 MS. WOLDSTAD: Woldstad. 3 MR. NAVECKY: Can you spell you last name for 4 us for the record. 5 MS. WOLDSTAD: W-o-l-d-s-t-a-d. Questions 6 regarding crossings, the guarantee of crossings, the guarantee 7 of being able to get to hunting, fishing, to be able to get to 8 your property, that we're not going to become landlocked, and 9 who pays for the crossings. 10 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Do you -- if you were 11 going to provide written comments, I think what would be a 12 greater value to us is if you have any specific land area or 13 any specific crossings that you currently use that are of 14 concern to you, if you could identify those as specifically as 15 possible in the written comments, that would be very useful to 16 us. 17 MS. WOLDSTAD: Right now the railroad, if they 18 deem your crossing unpermitted, they can close it. And so 19 there have been a couple cases where people have been cut off 20 from their property because they closed the crossings. So 21 unless there is some kind of guarantee that people are going to 22 be able to access their property. 23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Under the existing -- we own 24 property in this -- in the North Pole area, and the permitting 25 process to try to get a new crossing is cost prohibitive, it's	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 monumental beyond scale. They'll tell you one price, and you 2 have to contract directly to the railroad, you can't have a 3 private contractor come in and put a crossing in. 4 They may have told -- in one instance they told 5 a contractor to put his crossing in, it would cost him about 6 12- or \$15,000. After a hundred-and-some thousand dollar bill, 7 it was -- but that's a perfect example of are these crossings 8 going to be left historically, and are they going to be deemed 9 to be the railroad's responsibility to maintain forever? 10 MS. WOLDSTAD: Especially when you start 11 talking about RS 2477 Eielson. 12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: So Salcha Eielson Farm Road 13 has the Old Valdez Trail, which is an RS 2477 trail, and in the 14 North Pole area, the railroad has chose to ignore the 15 historical law allowing for crossings at those points. 16 MS. WOLDSTAD: And you also have the Rex Trail. 17 There's a variety of trails. 18 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Anything else that you 19 want to add for the record in your comments, in your oral 20 comments? I encourage you to submit written comments, too. 21 MS. WOLDSTAD: Okay. 22 MR. NAVECKY: That was the last person signed 23 up to provide formal oral comment. Anybody else like to speak? 24 MR. HALVARSON: I'd like to speak. 25 MR. NAVECKY: Sure. Could you come up front
--	--

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
90-1 1 than maybe it expedited their route. 2 But again, our concern is that we'd like to see 3 the railroad shift south along the existing logging trail that 4 runs here. And we hope they would take that into 5 consideration. Appreciate the opportunity to speak. 6 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Anyone else that 7 hadn't signed up like to speak? 8 MR. WHIPPLE: I'd like to speak. 9 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. 10 MR. WHIPPLE: My name is William Whipple, 11 W-h-i-p-p-l-e. We own a parcel on the Eielson Farm Road. We 12 farm somewhat. But one thing I haven't heard addressed as a 13 concern -- could be a concern if there's an accident, 14 especially on the bridge going across that Salcha. What's the 15 railroad have in mind for a quick response maintenance? 16 And I'm thinking of possibly tank cars loaded 17 with oil and an Exxon Valdez-type scenario where it's all 18 running down the Tanana River and getting into the 36-mile 19 slough that's adjacent to our property. Has there been 20 anything presented in the way of a maintenance facility there 21 by the crossing bridge? 22 MR. NAVECKY: I can't answer your question, but 23 if it's -- if we haven't addressed it, we can -- will address 24 your question in the Final EIS. 25 MR. WHIPPLE: Well, there's several things that	90-1 1 and give us your name and spell your last name, please. 2 MR. HALVARSON: Okay. My name is 3 Iver Halvarson, H-a-l-v-a-r-s-o-n. I represent a group of 4 approximately 25 property owners that are in the south common 5 segment, panel 5. And the concern we have is the location of 6 that, the proposed route. It only appears to show one option 7 at this time. 8 We're concerned that the proposed route runs 9 through some very sensitive wetland areas, and if it was 10 shifted south a mile and a half down to a logging road, which 11 runs kind of diagonally north and south down towards Delta, 12 that this area is actually better ground for constructing a 13 railroad. I've been on it many times. It's got good gravel 14 base on quite a bit of it. 15 Last night at the hearing, we voiced some of 16 my -- the people I'm with voiced concern that, you know, we 17 would like to keep it out of this sensitive wetlands area and 18 move it south. We were receiving -- the response was, well, 19 there's some hills and some terrain features that kind of 20 limit -- or kind of would extend the cost of developing that 21 route. 22 But our -- I guess our concern is that's good 23 gravel base. That would be good for a good railroad bed. It 24 would get the railroad away from this sensitive area. This is 25 a very boggy area, and I don't know why they chose that, other
91-1 1 than maybe it expedited their route. 2 But again, our concern is that we'd like to see 3 the railroad shift south along the existing logging trail that 4 runs here. And we hope they would take that into 5 consideration. Appreciate the opportunity to speak. 6 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Anyone else that 7 hadn't signed up like to speak? 8 MR. WHIPPLE: I'd like to speak. 9 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. 10 MR. WHIPPLE: My name is William Whipple, 11 W-h-i-p-p-l-e. We own a parcel on the Eielson Farm Road. We 12 farm somewhat. But one thing I haven't heard addressed as a 13 concern -- could be a concern if there's an accident, 14 especially on the bridge going across that Salcha. What's the 15 railroad have in mind for a quick response maintenance? 16 And I'm thinking of possibly tank cars loaded 17 with oil and an Exxon Valdez-type scenario where it's all 18 running down the Tanana River and getting into the 36-mile 19 slough that's adjacent to our property. Has there been 20 anything presented in the way of a maintenance facility there 21 by the crossing bridge? 22 MR. NAVECKY: I can't answer your question, but 23 if it's -- if we haven't addressed it, we can -- will address 24 your question in the Final EIS. 25 MR. WHIPPLE: Well, there's several things that	91-1 1 and give us your name and spell your last name, please. 2 MR. HALVARSON: Okay. My name is 3 Iver Halvarson, H-a-l-v-a-r-s-o-n. I represent a group of 4 approximately 25 property owners that are in the south common 5 segment, panel 5. And the concern we have is the location of 6 that, the proposed route. It only appears to show one option 7 at this time. 8 We're concerned that the proposed route runs 9 through some very sensitive wetland areas, and if it was 10 shifted south a mile and a half down to a logging road, which 11 runs kind of diagonally north and south down towards Delta, 12 that this area is actually better ground for constructing a 13 railroad. I've been on it many times. It's got good gravel 14 base on quite a bit of it. 15 Last night at the hearing, we voiced some of 16 my -- the people I'm with voiced concern that, you know, we 17 would like to keep it out of this sensitive wetlands area and 18 move it south. We were receiving -- the response was, well, 19 there's some hills and some terrain features that kind of 20 limit -- or kind of would extend the cost of developing that 21 route. 22 But our -- I guess our concern is that's good 23 gravel base. That would be good for a good railroad bed. It 24 would get the railroad away from this sensitive area. This is 25 a very boggy area, and I don't know why they chose that, other

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 91-2 1 happen in this country. If you've been around here long 2 enough, you'd know about them. And number one is earthquakes. 3 When you have an earthquake of any magnitude, and the last one 4 was only a 5, 6, 7, something like that, it wiped out the 5 highway down the line here, and up about five, six years ago. 6 If that happens and somebody is going across 7 that bridge and there's an accident and the line is disrupted 8 downstream, or the roads, then you can't get to it. It's not 9 accessible unless you're going to go in with a helicopter. 10 So anyway, something that should be thought 11 about. There's an awful lot of water going down in that Tanana 12 in the summertime. Not so bad in the winter, but there's still 13 flow in the wintertime, but nothing like in the summer. 14 The other thing that concerns us just a little 15 bit, when you build a levy in Salcha and you are diverting 16 water, how much of a downstream impact is that going to have? 17 Now, I realize mother nature, rainfall, snow melt, whatever, is 18 a unknown factor from year to year. I mean, you can't -- you 19 can't say, well, next year we're going to have this much. Last 20 year we almost had a flood out there, or very close. 21 But is there any way that you can plan ahead 22 that if you -- what do you call it? -- divert water flow, that 23 it's not going to impact and flood somebody downstream? I 24 mean, has that been looked into at all? 25 MR. NAVECKY: I don't know off the top of my 32 e:\1505-6552-40a8-b2a8-82a1a7172a0	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 head, but if we haven't we'll address your comments in the 2 Final EIS. That's all I can offer. 3 MR. WHIPPLE: I know Salcha has a -- 4 historically has a problem of flooding, and you got to do a lot 5 of work out there to make things work -- I mean, make the 6 crossing -- what do you call it? -- work. But we're quite a 7 ways away. I'm not sure how many miles it is, but it must be 8 at least eight or ten. Maybe more than that, maybe 20. I'm 9 not sure. 10 But I know when you start messing with water 11 flow, that someplace downstream it's going to -- there's going 12 to be some sort of an impact. Maybe not under normal 13 conditions, but under overflow-type conditions. Those are two 14 concerns I have. 15 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. 16 MR. WHIPPLE: I don't think I have anything 17 else. 18 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. 19 Anyone else? Yes, sir. Please come up. 20 MR. STUDY: Yeah, I'm Don Study, S-t-u-d-y. I 21 own some property at Southbank, and right now your railroad is 22 going across all the access to the hunting area. What are you 23 going to have as far as access from that Southbank area towards 24 the hills? Have you thought of that, or is it in the plan? 25 MR. NAVECKY: If you can provide some written 33 e:\1505-6552-40a8-b2a8-82a1a7172a0
---	---

January 13, 2009	North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 13, 2009	North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1	comments to us and identify specifically where you're property	1	MR. GRIFFIN: Please.
2	is located and where the crossings are of concern.	2	MR. NAVECKY: And your name, and spell your
3	MR. STUDY: Well, the Southbank Homestead area,	3	last name, please.
4	and it takes -- the logging road he was referring to is the	4	MR. GRIFFIN: My name is Lee Griffin,
5	biggest part of the access we use.	5	G-r-i-f-f-i-n. I'm an environmental scientist with the
6	MR. NAVECKY: Right. Well, unfortunately I'm	6	Department of the Army, U.S. Army Garrison, Fort Wainwright.
7	not an expert on all the land in the area, so we'd have to --	7	And I have the unfortunate advantage of being here for decades
8	we'll take your comment, and we'll address it as best we can in	8	and decades and decades.
9	the Final EIS as far as the access restrictions it may or may	9	And I want to point out that basically
10	not create, and what type of crossings may or may not be	10	everything south of the Tanana River from Fairbanks to the
11	provided.	11	Delta River was a bombing range in WWII, bombing striking
12	MR. STUDY: It seems like every time you build	12	range. So anytime you're on the south of the Tanana River,
13	access in this state, somebody has to cut off access to the	13	there's a highly likelihood of unexploded ordnance, UXO, or
14	people who use it. It's just a thought.	14	MMR, military munitions residue, that you can inadvertently dig
15	MS. DAVIES: You know what, last night you	15	up in your right of way road building process. That's a simple
16	talked about a map.	16	comment.
17	MR. NAVECKY: And your name is, for the record?	17	MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Thank you.
18	MS. DAVIES: Oh, I'm sorry. Robin Davies. You	18	MR. GRIFFIN: And I'll give it to you in
19	talked about a map where people can draw the trails that they	19	writing.
20	wanted to access. Do you have that again?	20	MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments.
21	MR. NAVECKY: Yes, it's in the back room over	21	MR. GRIFFIN: There you go.
22	here.	22	MR. NAVECKY: Thank you.
23	MS. DAVIES: Okay.	23	MR. GRIFFIN: I didn't see it in the EIS.
24	MR. NAVECKY: Is there anyone else that wants	24	MR. NAVECKY: Anyone else?
25	to provide comments on the record?	25	MS. WOLDSTAD: I do.

93-1

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1 have a better understanding of what the issues and concerns 2 are, as opposed to just being a simple expression of 3 preference. 4 And that goes along with the environmental 5 impacts, any comments as detailed as possible on mitigation 6 related to, for example, crossings, if there are specific 7 concerns, specific crossings, or just future crossings, be as 8 detailed as possible in your comments to us, because that 9 enables us to have a better understanding of the issues and how 10 to address them in the Final EIS. 11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I just have a question. Are 12 we stuck basically with the routes that you show in this -- the 13 Draft EIS? In other words, I heard comments here tonight about 14 moving the railroad into (indiscernible - away from microphone) 15 at Eielson actually where there's a highway and a railroad and, 16 say, power poles and pipelines will all be in the same place. 17 Is that even a viable alternative at this point in the 18 Draft EIS? 19 MR. NAVECKY: I think what the commenter was 20 referring to was the Eielson 3 alternative where it approaches 21 and parallels the Richardson Highway for a short distance. I 22 believe that's what she was referring to. 23 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I guess my question would be, 24 then, why don't we have alternative that one is for the 25 existing rail all the way down alongside the highway until you	1 MR. NAVECKY: Could you restate your name 2 again, please. 3 MS. WOLDSTAD: Bonnie Woldstad. 4 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. 5 MS. WOLDSTAD: I'd like to address the access 6 comments. You're mentioning, you know, show us where you want 7 them right now. You need to plan in the future. Right now you 8 say, oh, okay, we've got hunting here, hunting here, and 9 hunting here, we've got three access points that you designed. 10 You've just designed in landlocking everybody else. 11 So you're going to need to design in for the 12 future, the access points and the crossings, so that we can 13 continue to develop and make use of the lands. So realize 14 where we're talking about the trails and stuff now, those 15 definitely need to be accessed, but also designed for future 16 developments. 17 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Thank you for your 18 comments. Anyone else? Last call. Okay. Well, thank you for 19 your oral comments. And I encourage everyone that has 20 additional comments, or if they want to reiterate their 21 comments, to provide them to us in writing. 22 And as most of you did tonight, if -- I 23 encourage you to provide as much detail as possible. For 24 example, instead of just saying my preference is Eielson 3, if 25 you can provide the basis for your reasons, and that helps us

127-1

January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 38 1 reach some point (indiscernible - away from microphone) so 2 you're not impacting all the private property and farm land? 3 There's an alternative that doesn't go by here that should be 4 here. 5 6 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Well, if you -- you know, 7 I'd encourage you to provide that in written comments. Because 8 if that's something we should have taken a look at and didn't, 9 then -- and I don't have all the institutional knowledge buried 10 in here, because if I go there, there's a long process in 11 instruction of alternatives, and it will be easier for us to 12 address your question if we have it in writing, and we'll look 13 at it and address it in the Final EIS. Yes, sir. 14 15 MR. ETCHEVERY: Real quick, I heard something 16 about they were looking into railroad selections 30 years ago; 17 is that correct? 18 19 MR. NAVECKY: My understanding is this -- you 20 know, there's -- this railroad has been under consideration for 21 many years. 22 23 MR. GRIFFIN: Since WWII. 24 25 MR. ETCHEVERY: Okay. How much of it has been approved? 26 27 MR. GRIFFIN: There's a right of way depicted 28 on the old USGS maps from -- basically from Ladd Field to 29 Fort Greeley. Through the flats pretty much. 30 31 MR. ETCHEVERY: Okay. But did that implement	January 13, 2009 North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 39 1 how many people have moved into the area or the 2 (indiscernible - away from microphone) spill that was over 3 there that was just found or the animals, or is that just what 4 they decided on? 5 6 MR. GRIFFIN: That was when it was all federal 7 land and all the bombing and gunnery range and.... 8 9 MR. ETCHEVERY: So 30 years later. 10 11 MR. GRIFFIN:that was before there was 12 such a law as NEPA, that was before there was the 13 Endangered Species Act, that was before there was a Clean Water 14 Act, that was before there was a Clean Air Act, et cetera, 15 et cetera, et cetera. 16 17 MR. WHIPPLE: That was when Noah built the Ark. 18 19 MR. GRIFFIN: Just about. Hey, I'm almost that 20 old. 21 22 MR. WHIPPLE: Noah didn't have any 23 restrictions. 24 25 MR. NAVECKY: Are we done with formal comments, 26 or just a -- this is just a question? Okay. I think we're 27 going to go off the record now with the court reporter, and 28 that will be the conclusion of the formal meeting. And I thank 29 everyone for coming this evening and taking time out of your 30 evenings, and for those also who came before us and then 31 provided us with oral comments. Thank you very much. 32 33 (END OF PROCEEDINGS)
---	--

e:\16056-6658-4608-6038-8201\171720b

e:\16056-6658-4608-6038-8201\171720b

January 13, 2009	North Pole Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	40
1	C E R T I F I C A T E	1
2	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)	2
3	STATE OF ALASKA) ss.	3
4	I, Crystal D. Scotti, Notary Public in and for the	4
5	State of Alaska, residing at North Pole, Alaska, and electronic	5
6	reporter for Liz D'Amour & Associates, Inc., do hereby certify:	6
7	That the annexed and foregoing Public Meeting was taken	7
8	before me on the 13th day of January 2009, beginning at the	8
9	hour of 5:00 p.m., at North Pole City Council Chambers, 125	9
10	Snowman Lane, North Pole, Alaska;	10
11	That this meeting, as heretofore annexed, is a true and	11
12	correct transcription of the testimony of all parties, taken by	12
13	me and thereafter transcribed by me;	13
14	That the transcript has been retained by me for the	14
15	purpose of filing the same with Ms. Melissa Elefante DuMond,	15
16	Project Manager, ICF International, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax,	16
17	Virginia 22031;	17
18	That I am not a relative or employee or attorney or	18
19	counsel of any of the parties, nor am I financially interested	19
20	in this action.	20
21	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and	21
22	affixed my seal this 26th day of January 2009.	22
23		23
24		24
25		25
	 Crystal D. Scotti Notary Public in and for Alaska My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010	
	SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC MEETING DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT FOR THE ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION'S PROPOSED NORTHERN RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT FINANCE DOCKET 35095 Salcha, Alaska January 14, 2009 5:00 P.m.	
January 14, 2009	Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		
6		
7		
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		
13		
14		
15		
16		
17	APPEARANCES: Mr. Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board Mr. Don Perrin, Alaska Department of Natural Resources Ms. Alan Summerville, ICF Ms. Melissa Elefante DuMond, ICF Mr. Dave Johnson, ICF Mr. Mike Nagy, ENTRIX	
18		
19		
20		
21		
22		
23		
24		
25		

cal:\p\14-01-04-08-00\7-355586\00402

51:57706-4426-4012-6688-937866a3786

January 14, 2009 Sakha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	2 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 MR. NAVECKY: Good evening, ladies and 3 gentlemen. I think we're about ready to get started if you 4 can -- for those of you who would like to sit, please have a 5 seat. If you'd like to stand, that's fine, too. 6 This is the public meeting on the 7 Alaska Railroad's Proposed Northern Rail Extension, which is a 8 proposed rail line that would run from approximately North Pole 9 down to Delta Junction. 10 My name is Dave Navecky. I am with the 11 Surface Transportation Board. The Surface Transportation Board 12 is a federal agency that has the authority to license the 13 construction and operation of rail lines. We're an economic 14 regulatory agency. And before a rail line can be constructed, 15 a license from our agency is required. 16 The rail line came to us -- the Alaska Railroad 17 came to us in 2005 stating that they had an interest in 18 constructing a rail line from North Pole down to 19 Delta Junction. At that time they had a series of alignments 20 that they had developed that they wanted us to consider as 21 potential routes down to Delta Junction. 22 We then initiated the Environmental Impact 23 Statement process to identify the potential impacts of the 24 proposed project and disclose those potential impacts to 25 citizens and agencies within the state of Alaska. We started	3 1 that process with scoping, what is referred to as scoping, in 2 which we had a series of public meetings in the region to 3 identify the proposed project, and at that time what alignments 4 were under consideration by the railroad. 5 We had not identified which alternatives at 6 that point that my agency would consider in the Environmental 7 Impact Statement. That's a decision that's made by my agency. 8 It's not a decision that's made by the railroad. 9 We took those comments from the public and the 10 agencies, and we then identified a scope of study for the 11 Environmental Impact Statement to address the concerns that 12 were expressed to us by the public and the agencies. And we 13 also identified a set of alternatives to get the rail line from 14 North Pole down to Delta Junction. 15 And over the course of a couple years we did 16 field studies, wetlands and historic sites, and collected data 17 on nesting sites for bald eagles and other raptors, and all 18 sorts of data we collected in the field. And that effort 19 resulted in the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, which we 20 issued in December. Again, that document was published by my 21 agency, the Surface Transportation Board. 22 Throughout that process we were also assisted 23 by eight other agencies, and we refer to them as cooperating 24 agencies. And those agencies have a role in the project. 25 Either the railroad would need to obtain some type of permit	ca7fec15d51df-4c98-8ba7-38558b00ae2 ca7fec15d51df-4c98-8ba7-38558b00ae2
---	---	--	---

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 from those agencies, some type of approval from those agencies, 2 or those agencies are or would provide funding for the 3 potential operation or maintenance of the rail line. 4 And those are the U.S. Department of Defense, 5 Alaska Command, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Bureau of 6 Land Management, the Federal Railroad Administration, the 7 Federal Transit Administration, the United States Coast Guard, 8 and the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. 9 The purpose of tonight's meeting is to allow 10 you folks to provide to us oral comments on the 11 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. And those comments will 12 be reviewed and addressed when we do the Final Environmental 13 Impact -- prepare the Final Environmental Impact Statement. 14 The comments you provide to us orally today 15 will be official comments that will be put into the record on 16 the project, and they're being transcribed by the court 17 reporter over here to my right. 18 However, the other options you have are to 19 provide us written comments, either in letters that you mail to 20 us, or you can provide us written comments through our Web 21 site. And the little project description document that we 22 provided to you at the table and also in the 23 Draft Environmental Impact Statement provides instructions on 24 how to provide both written comments through the mail and 25 through our Web site.	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 The written comments that you can provide to us 2 are due on February 2nd, 2009, next month. If you mail the 3 comments, the comments must be postmarked by February 2nd. If 4 you're going to submit the comments to us electronically 5 through our Web site, they just need to be submitted by the end 6 of the day on February 2nd. 7 Whether you provide comments to us orally or in 8 writing, either form of comments is considered equally. 9 Whether you speak tonight or whether you provide us written 10 comments, we don't place greater weight on either. They're 11 considered equally so. If you don't feel you're ready to speak 12 tonight or just aren't comfortable speaking and would rather 13 provide comments in writing, rest assured those comments 14 receive equal weight to anyone that may choose to speak this 15 evening. 16 What we will do is we'll take the roster of 17 people who have signed up to speak, and we will allow those 18 individuals approximately five minutes to speak. And we will 19 ask those individuals to come to the front of the room, state 20 their name, and spell their last name so that the court 21 reporter can transcribe that correctly. 22 At the end of that time, if everyone that has 23 elected to speak on the record, we will then close the formal 24 portion of the meeting. And then we will adjourn the meeting, 25 but we will hang around for a little while in case you have
---	--

ca7fec1d51df-4c58-8ba7-35558b00ae2

ca7fec1d51df-4c58-8ba7-35558b00ae2

January 14, 2009 Sakha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 6 1 some informal comments or questions about the process and where 2 we go next. 3 Where we go next is we will take all those 4 comments, both the oral comments and written comments, and we 5 will consider those comments, and then we'll prepare the 6 Final EIS. Again, that is the Surface Transportation Board and 7 the cooperating agencies. The railroad is not involved in the 8 preparation of this document. In fact, I understand they will 9 be providing written comments on the Draft Environmental Impact 10 Statement as well. They were not involved in it in its 11 preparation. 12 Once the final Environmental Impact Statement 13 is prepared, then my agency, the Surface Transportation Board, 14 will make a decision on whether to grant the license to the 15 railroad to construct and operate the rail line. 16 And that -- the agency can do that in three 17 ways. It can deny the license entirely outright, they can 18 approve the license, or they can approve the project with 19 mitigation. That would close the process from my agency's 20 perspective. 21 If my agency approves the project, the railroad 22 still needs to get all the other federal and state permits that 23 would normally be required, such as those from the U.S. Army 24 Corps of Engineers, the U.S. Coast Guard, the Alaska Department 25 of Natural Resources, and so on. So they still have a number	January 14, 2009 Sakha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 7 1 of procedures to go through before the rail line could be 2 constructed, assuming they receive all their permits and 3 approvals as required. 4 With me at the table here is Don Perrin with 5 the Alaska Department of Natural Resources. And as I 6 mentioned, DNR is one of our cooperating agencies. They also 7 have a special role in the process related to a state statute. 8 And I'm going to let Don explain that process to you. 9 MR. PERRIN: Thanks, Dave. Hi. My name is Don Perrin. 10 I'm with the state of Alaska Department of Natural Resources. 11 And in addition to DNR being a cooperating agency on the NEPA 12 EIS, we're also entrusted with implementing a state law that 13 was passed in 2004 which is entitled The Extension of the 14 Alaska Railroad, which allows the railroad to identify a 15 corridor 500 foot wide from existing facilities in the vicinity 16 of North Pole all the way to the Canadian border. 17 So the railroad, based on alternative analysis 18 studies and other documents that they've been working on, has 19 requested that DNR reserve the corridor. And so what DNR needs 20 to do now is consult with potentially affected parties and make 21 a determination and a finding as to whether or not the location 22 of the rail minimizes impacts on existing rights of way and 23 uses and access for hunting, fishing, trapping, and other 24 recreation activities. 25 And we intend to issue a public notice with a
---	---

cal:\ec\is\14-458-8a\7-3555880.docx

cal:\ec\is\14-458-8a\7-3555880.docx

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1 writing -- and I encourage you to do that. We're very 2 interested in your comments -- it's most helpful to us if you 3 go into as much detail as possible in your comments. For 4 example, on some portions of the route there are alternatives 5 in which the rail line could go. 6 If you have a preference for one or the other, 7 in addition to identifying your preference, if you can explain 8 why you have that preference, or why you don't like the other 9 one. That's very helpful for us to understand the issues 10 behind your preference. 11 If you have concerns about potential impacts 12 and you can explain what your concerns are, why those -- why 13 you have those concerns. The document has some mitigation 14 measures, some potential mitigation measures to minimize or 15 avoid impacts from the project. If you have comments on those 16 mitigation measures, if you think there should be other 17 mitigation measures, we would encourage you to propose those to 18 us and why you think those should be added to the project. 19 So as much information and as much detail as 20 you can go into will be most helpful to us. So now we'll do 21 the.... 22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Question? 23 MR. NAVECKY: Sure. 24 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Hey, Dave, could you point 25 out or have the cooperating agencies identify themselves if	8 1 proposed decision after the STB issues their decision to 2 license the rail. And when we do that, we'll have a 30-day 3 public comment period, which we'll take comments from folks as 4 to whether this is going to have an effect on them. 5 As Dave said, the project requires other state 6 and federal permits, including Fish & Game, for extreme 7 crossings. But at this point, we're just mainly concerned 8 about access for individuals so that they can get across the 9 rail line and back into the Tanana Flats and do what they've 10 traditionally done. 11 And so we've got a set of maps over here with 12 AJ from DNR. And I would encourage you to go over there and, 13 with a marker, indicate where you guys go within reason, and 14 where you cross. It would also be helpful to have your name, 15 and also what you -- what method you use to cross and what time 16 of year so we can just kind of collect a general sense of where 17 people go so we can get a baseline as to what the impacts are 18 going to be and work with the railroad to make sure that you 19 can cross the rail line and not be affected. 20 That's pretty much all I have. If you have any 21 questions about the DNR role in this process, please call the 22 Division of Mining, Land and Water in Fairbanks at 451-2740. 23 Thank you. 24 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you, Don. Whether or not 25 you choose to provide comments to us tonight orally or in

cal'eic19:51df-458f-8ba7-35558b00e42

cal'eic19:51df-458f-8ba7-35558b00e42

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

10

1 they're here tonight.

2 MR. NAVECKY: Sure. We do have some of the
3 cooperating agencies here. Of course, there's Don with the
4 Alaska Department of Natural Resources. We have a
5 representative.....

6 MR. PERRIN: My other cohost is in the back of
7 the room, also DNR.

8 MR. NAVECKY: We have a representative from the
9 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. And is anyone from BLM here?

10 MS. JACOBSEN: Yeah, I'm right here.
11 Shelly Jacobsen with BLM.

12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: And Kelly.....

13 MR. NAVECKY: Any other agencies?

14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Fish & Game.

15 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Fish & Game.

16 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Alaska Department of

17 Fish & Game.

18 MR. NAVECKY: And just to explain, if you look
19 at the document, they don't appear on the document. And the

20 reason that is, is that when we started this process, the

21 Fish & Game folks were part of DNR, and there was some

22 reorganization. And so but those folks are still involved in
23 the process as we were at the beginning as a cooperating

24 agency.

25 We'll now go into -- we only have one person

ca\ec\is\14\458-8ea7-38558800ae2

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

11

1 signed up to speak.

2 MR. JOHNSON: We have two more.

3 MR. NAVECKY: Two more? Okay. We have a

4 couple people signed up to speak formally. Again, I'll ask you

5 to come to the front of the room when I call your name, and if

6 you could spell your last name for the court reporter, that

7 would be most useful. We'll provide you approximately five

8 minutes. We don't obviously have a long list of people signed

9 up, so if you take longer, that's just fine.

10 And we're most interested in comments. If you

11 have a question about the project and want to have that entered

12 into the record, feel free to ask questions, but we're not

13 really prepared here to answer technical questions about the

14 project, because, as you can imagine, the document was 1,100

15 pages, and we had biologists and archaeologists and all that

16 type of stuff working on the project, and we just don't have

17 the ability, nor have the data off the top of our head to

18 answer questions.

19 But if you have a question you would like

20 entered into the record, the court reporter will take those

21 down, and we will address those questions in the Final EIS.

22 Afterwards, as we adjourn, if there's some informal questions

23 about the process, where we go from here, or that type of

24 stuff, we'll try to address those questions as best we can once

25 we adjourn the formal portion of the hearing.

ca\ec\is\14\458-8ea7-38558800ae2

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 94-1 1 Let's see, the first person is Harvey Drake, if 2 you could come up, please. 3 MR. DRAKE: Name's Harvey Drake, D- -- as in 4 Delta -- r-a-k-e. Most of mine are questions and concerns. 5 But has the routes been decided? In other words, is it 2 and 3 6 or 2 and -- are they going to cross at Bradbury or Flag Hill? 7 Has that been decided? 8 MR. NAVECKY: That's a process question I can 9 answer that the -- there has been no decision on any of the 10 alternatives. Any of the alternatives that you see on those 11 boards are still under consideration. 12 MR. DRAKE: Still alive? 13 MR. NAVECKY: Yes. 14 MR. DRAKE: Okay. Next question is, will the 15 railroad build the bridge, even though they don't have funding 16 for the rest of the railroad? 17 MR. NAVECKY: That's a question I can't answer. 18 We'll put that one in the record. 19 MR. DRAKE: If they use the Bradbury Crossing 20 and build a railroad grade going down through there, is there 21 any way of relieving that water that normally flows toward 22 Nenana? Or is that all going to be channeled back this way and 23 flood the people of Salcha a little bit worse than they have 24 been? 25 Because there's a lot of water that goes out 94-2 12	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 94-3 1 across the flats during the flooding season, and it goes all 2 the way to the foothills. So there's a lot of water there. So 3 if they go across at Bradbury where they've surveyed, that will 4 create a little dike over there and send all that water back 5 this way, possibly even as far as Eielson. Because this summer 6 we had a really good time with water here and a lot of surface 7 water, so it could be a lot worse. 8 That's about all I've got to say is I just 9 wondered if any routes had been established, if the bridge 10 would be built regardless, because I heard they had funding. 11 And beyond that, we'll have to wait and see. 12 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments, 13 Mr. Drake. Next is Shelly Curtis, if you could come up, 14 please. 15 MS. CURTIS: Shelly Curtis. Curtis, 16 C-u-r-t-i-s. I'm actually here for two reasons. One, I'm here 17 representing Salcha School, and also for my personal reasons. 18 First with the school, several people would 19 like to know if it takes the route that goes through our 20 school, it shows it being moved. Now, who is responsible to 21 move our school? And are they planning on just picking the 22 building up and moving? Are they rebuilding the school? And 23 then what happens to our ski trails with this new route? Who's 24 paying for our school to move? We want to know. 25 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. We can certainly -- we'll 95-1 13
---	---

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 address that -- if it's not already in the document, we can
2 address that in the final document for you.
3 MS. CURTIS: Okay. So we're not going to know
4 until -- when would that -- that we would know what happens to
5 our school? It's not just one school, it's our whole community
6 school. So there's no answer there?
7 MR. NAVECKY: Actually, I mean, I -- as I
8 mentioned, it's a -- I don't know all the details off the top
9 of my head in there. So I think some of the answers that
10 people are looking for are probably in the document, and I
11 don't have the information on the top of my head....
12 MS. CURTIS: Okay.
13 MR. NAVECKY:to tell you what it is or
14 what page to go to to look at, so....
15 MS. CURTIS: Yeah, because we couldn't find it.
16 Okay. Personally, we have a cabin over on five-mile
17 Clear Creek on the Tanana Flats, which this railroad is
18 affecting a lot. It's showing a bridge down father where we
19 have to take our boat to get to our cabin, and then another
20 bridge crossing the upper headwaters of this creek. And we're
21 concerned about access. When they're building the railroad and
22 also afterwards is what kind of access will there be for us?
23 And they're also showing damming off a stream
24 that comes into Clear Creek that helps keep the water at a
25 certain level, along with other dammings over there affecting

95-2

c:\eic\is\14\428-8a7-35558000a2

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

1 this access. Any ideas about the bridges there? I mean, are
2 we still going to be able to boat where we boat? Are we still
3 going to be able to access our property?
4 MR. PERRIN: Could you take the time to mark up
5 your locations and access points and methods on the map?
6 MS. CURTIS: Okay.
7 MR. PERRIN: In addition, I note that the
8 Salcha trails are indicated in the document. Could you maybe
9 take a look at that and see if that's accurate.
10 MS. CURTIS: Okay.
11 MR. PERRIN: And if not, you know, comment for
12 us. We at DNR really need to do a lot of outreach to find out
13 where everybody is going. Because currently we've got a
14 cursory review, but we don't -- we just don't know.
15 MS. CURTIS: And that was another question, is,
16 what about the existing trails? Like, right now one of your
17 routes go between our cabin and my tree stand. It goes right
18 in between it. And there's trails that have been there for 25
19 years that we have been using. And now it's saying, you know,
20 we -- you're not going to have access. Why?
21 MR. PERRIN: We're working on that.
22 MS. CURTIS: Okay. And the other question that
23 we had was the size of right of way. A 500-foot right of way.
24 That's pretty big.
25 MR. PERRIN: Well, I should have clarified.

c:\eic\is\14\428-8a7-35558000a2

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 16 1 It's initially 500 foot, in which time the railroad constructs 2 the rail line, then it is reduced to 200 feet.... 3 MS. CURTIS: Okay. 4 MR. PERRIN:100 feet either side of the 5 centerline. 6 MS. CURTIS: Okay. Because I was reading 200, 7 and I'm like, 500? 8 MR. PERRIN: Yeah. Sorry about that. 9 MS. CURTIS: Okay. I think that's it. Thank 10 you. 11 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you, Ms. Curtis. Following 12 up on Ms. Curtis's comments, if you have similar comments 13 related to access to your property or to where you 14 traditionally hunt and so forth, Don had mentioned the maps 15 over here, and it would be very useful if you mark those on 16 those maps. 17 Or if you're going to provide us written 18 comments, if you could attach a map to your comments and 19 identify where you currently would cross the -- where the 20 proposed rail line would be located, that would be a bit most 21 useful to us so we have a better idea where these crossings are 22 located and where your property, where you recreate, or where 23 your homes are or your summer cabins, so forth and so on, that 24 is very helpful to us. Next is Carolyn Lincoln. 25 MS. LINCOLN: Carolyn Lincoln, L-i-n-c-o-l-n,	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 17 1 Salcha. Okay. I have a couple of concerns, some are personal, 2 some involve the fish and wildlife, the migration streams for 3 the salmon if they should go across the river at the Bradbury 4 place, or even if it goes across at Flag Hill. 5 Any abutments or dikes on either side of the 6 river, we need to have good studies done that our salmon can 7 get where they need to get to unimpeded. And we have a lot of 8 little tributaries that could be blocked off. The salmon know 9 where they're going if you don't mess up their road. So that's 10 one. 11 We have traditional moose crossings from that 12 area across the Tanana Flats to this area. They should not be 13 impeded either. They need to go where they need to go. So 14 whatever plan is implemented needs to bear those things in 15 mind. 16 We have traditional hunters, we have 17 subsistence hunters, we have recreational hunters, and we have, 18 in the past, always had a good healthy moose population that 19 traverses back and forth on the average of twice a year. We 20 move this way, they move that way. Of course, the salmon have 21 their pattern, and I imagine you folks are aware of all of 22 that, Fish & Game, Department of Natural Resources. 23 Then one of my other issues is that one of the 24 proposed plans crosses at the Bradbury Crossing, and that is 25 the narrowest part of the river as I understand it. And
96-1	96-2
96-3	96-3

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 96-3	18 1 probably the most easily accessible. But if there is diking 2 that goes on both sides of the river and narrows that river 3 down, I believe that needs to be of prime consideration that 4 there is going to be something to control that water, because 5 if you're going to narrow down its avenue, there are going to 6 be backup problems, there's going to be runoff problems as 7 Mr. Drake mentioned. So maybe a runoff area on other side or 8 whatever. We don't need it over here. We have more than 9 enough. 10 As far as the need or the desire for the 11 railroad, I think it's important that our state advances, as 12 one of the other members had said. I think it's important, but 13 it needs to be done so right. Now, Fairbanks has got some 14 diking and some flood control. North Pole has some diking and 15 some flood control. Salcha has a little erosion control berms 16 going on. 17 Now, the railroad can actually work in Salcha's 18 favor. This is a long, far-spread-out community. They can 19 destroy us as a community and as individuals, or they can make 20 our life easier by making sure that we don't flood every year. 21 I mean, they can't predict every flood. But there's a lot they 22 can do. And I know these people have studied a lot, but that 23 needs to be written in that they will cause no harm. 24 Somehow that has to be guaranteed for the 25 livelihood of our community. And we're a very tight community. ca/rectis1516f-4d8f-8ea7-355588b0e0a2
January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	19 1 And we could be wiped out in a couple of years if this isn't 2 done right. And if it's done right, we could be here forever. 3 And then I have some personal issues, but they 4 more pertain to starting out right, continuing right, and doing 5 all of these things in a proper manner so that they don't do 6 harm. They don't do harm to our school, they don't do harm to 7 our ski trails that have taken 30 years of hard volunteer work 8 to establish, they don't bother our moose population, our fish 9 population. So there's a lot to be considered, and I know 10 you're taking that all in. And that's my official stand on it. 11 Thank you. 12 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. 13 Okay. The next person that signed up is Patricia Browman (ph). 14 MS. BROWMAN: Well, no, I didn't mean to speak. 15 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. That's fine. We're not 16 going to make you. Next is Melissa Wills-Markgraf. Did I 17 pronounce that correctly? 18 MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: Yeah, you did. I'm here 19 with Salcha's Neighborly Organization. It's Melissa, 20 M-e-l-i-s-s-a, W-i-l-l-s hyphen M-a-r-k-k.... 21 COURT REPORTER: I'm sorry. I can't hear you. 22 Your last name? 23 MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: W-i-l-l-s hyphen 24 M-a-r-k-g-r-a-f. 25 COURT REPORTER: Thank you. ca/rectis1516f-4d8f-8ea7-355588b0e0a2

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

20

MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: Okay. I'd like --

Carolyn, I'm glad that you guys are here asking for information and input and that this is going through. I just want to make sure that it benefits the community, like all the rest of you all do.

Three things was asked about it to me. One, when you build a bridge, will it have local access to assist us in our hunting and our adventures across the river?

Two, when you make the changes to the highway to enable you to do this, can it benefit the community by creating turn lanes or merge lanes? Which the community built on a highway at 65 miles per hour really needs.

And three, is there any way we can get a whistle stop to help us with local public transit to town and shipping out of it? And I know you won't have those answers.

MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments.

Next is Terry Bradbury.

MS. BRADBURY: I didn't think it was going to be so soon.

MR. NAVECKY: I'm sorry. You have your thoughts all together?

MS. BRADBURY: No. But that's all right.

Well, I think it's....

MR. NAVECKY: Could you spell your last name for the reporter, please.

ca\rec\14\14f4c58-8ea7-38558800e42

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

21

MS. BRADBURY: Oh, all right. B-r-a-d-b-u-r-y.

The first name is Terry with a Y. I think most of you know me, know where I live, and know the problems that we've had over there. We couldn't get any help from any of the agencies, so my husband took it upon himself to start hauling rock from the top of Balch's Hill. And he hauled approximately a thousand yards there. And that's a lot of trips up and down that hill.

So I hate to see anything put across there that is going to cause more problems on this bank of the Tanana.

Even though my bank right in front of our house is rock and forrest and I don't have a problem at this time. I would hate to see for it to happen downstream if the same thing isn't done.

Everybody out here knows what the ground -- hi, Eric. Everybody out there knows what the ground is like next to the river. You can just sit and watch it fall in because

that's the way silt does. But the years that have -- that we have worked on it to save it out there should not -- I don't think anyone realizes the amount of work that goes into something like that. And the amount of money that it costs.

And people have always said, well, what does it matter? You've got a Cat, you got a loader, you got a backhoe and a dump truck, what does it matter? We had to buy all those because we needed that done and nobody else would do it.

And if there's just any way to get them -- I

ca\rec\14\14f4c58-8ea7-38558800e42

97-1

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 99-1	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 99-1
January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 100-1	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 99-1

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 101-1 1 resulting in a lot of other problems of traffic and so forth. 2 And if this isn't considered, then we're all going to suffer. 3 Thank you. 4 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. 5 Anyone else? Yes, sir, come on up. We'll get you both. 6 MR. MARTIN: Terrence Martin, M-a-r-t-i-n. My 7 question is, when you do your final decision, is it going to 8 pick the route, or is that still going to be up to the railroad 9 and everybody else? 10 MR. NAVECKY: The board's -- the final decision 11 from the Surface Transportation Board will tell -- will 12 identify the route that the railroad would be authorized to 13 construct and operate. 14 MR. MARTIN: So it's going to either pick 15 Flag Hill or the Bradbury Crossing, and it's going to -- that's 16 going to be the decision? 17 MR. NAVECKY: Right. 18 MR. MARTIN: Okay. 19 MR. WERNER: My name is Jeff Werner, 20 W-e-r-n-e-r. I work with farmers and ranchers throughout this 21 area, and the proposed route is going to happen wherever you 22 guys decide to put it. But in the construction process of this 23 rail line, you mentioned the right of way is going to be wider 24 than 200 feet. 25 And your community is going to be significantly ca7fec19451df4c98-8ba7-38558800e02	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 101-1 1 the court reporter to stay on, so if you would like to give 2 oral comments on the record this evening but would rather do it 3 one on one rather than in front of the group, you'll have that 4 option after we adjourn the formal part of the meeting. 5 So is there anyone else that would like to 6 speak before the group on the record? Sure. Come on up, sir. 7 If you could give your name and spell your last name for us, 8 please. 9 MR. PETERSON: Dave Peterson, P-e-t-e-r-s-o-n. 10 I also wanted to thank everybody involved in this for not 11 notifying me of any meetings. And I have railroad easement on 12 my property, and I'm, I don't know, 500 feet from the 13 Bradway Crossing. I am in favor of this. I do believe it will 14 do a lot for the state. I have no problem with the railroad 15 coming to town. But if it's not done properly, you know, like 16 people have said, it will damage a lot. 17 I guess you're wanting comments on which route 18 a person prefers? 19 MR. NAVECKY: Uh-huh. 20 MR. PETERSON: Of course, I would -- on map 2, 21 Salcha alternative segments, I would have to go for the 22 Salcha 1 segment. Salcha 2 will go through my house. So -- 23 but as I said, I am in favor of this, as long as research is 24 done. I've seen it make or break a lot of little towns in 25 states, not dealing with nearly as big of water problems, but ca7fec19451df4c98-8ba7-38558800e02	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 102-1 1 resulting in a lot of other problems of traffic and so forth. 2 And if this isn't considered, then we're all going to suffer. 3 Thank you. 4 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. 5 Anyone else? Yes, sir, come on up. We'll get you both. 6 MR. MARTIN: Terrence Martin, M-a-r-t-i-n. My 7 question is, when you do your final decision, is it going to 8 pick the route, or is that still going to be up to the railroad 9 and everybody else? 10 MR. NAVECKY: The board's -- the final decision 11 from the Surface Transportation Board will tell -- will 12 identify the route that the railroad would be authorized to 13 construct and operate. 14 MR. MARTIN: So it's going to either pick 15 Flag Hill or the Bradbury Crossing, and it's going to -- that's 16 going to be the decision? 17 MR. NAVECKY: Right. 18 MR. MARTIN: Okay. 19 MR. WERNER: My name is Jeff Werner, 20 W-e-r-n-e-r. I work with farmers and ranchers throughout this 21 area, and the proposed route is going to happen wherever you 22 guys decide to put it. But in the construction process of this 23 rail line, you mentioned the right of way is going to be wider 24 than 200 feet. 25 And your community is going to be significantly ca7fec19451df4c98-8ba7-38558800e02	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 103-1 1 the court reporter to stay on, so if you would like to give 2 oral comments on the record this evening but would rather do it 3 one on one rather than in front of the group, you'll have that 4 option after we adjourn the formal part of the meeting. 5 So is there anyone else that would like to 6 speak before the group on the record? Sure. Come on up, sir. 7 If you could give your name and spell your last name for us, 8 please. 9 MR. PETERSON: Dave Peterson, P-e-t-e-r-s-o-n. 10 I also wanted to thank everybody involved in this for not 11 notifying me of any meetings. And I have railroad easement on 12 my property, and I'm, I don't know, 500 feet from the 13 Bradway Crossing. I am in favor of this. I do believe it will 14 do a lot for the state. I have no problem with the railroad 15 coming to town. But if it's not done properly, you know, like 16 people have said, it will damage a lot. 17 I guess you're wanting comments on which route 18 a person prefers? 19 MR. NAVECKY: Uh-huh. 20 MR. PETERSON: Of course, I would -- on map 2, 21 Salcha alternative segments, I would have to go for the 22 Salcha 1 segment. Salcha 2 will go through my house. So -- 23 but as I said, I am in favor of this, as long as research is 24 done. I've seen it make or break a lot of little towns in 25 states, not dealing with nearly as big of water problems, but ca7fec19451df4c98-8ba7-38558800e02
--	---	--	---

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1 route, initially a 500-foot corridor is identified, at which 2 time the railroad constructs the line. Then the state is 3 required to convey title to the land for a 200-foot right of 4 way either side of the centerline. And that's for state land 5 only. 6 MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: Sorry. 7 MR. NAVECKY: That's okay. 8 MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: I was expecting to hear 9 about it. You keep mentioning Flag Hill. It's Wills-Markgraf. 10 And that's a Native bluff. They have a cemetery up there, 11 right? Am I on the right bluff? 12 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You're okay. 13 AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, that's Flag Hill. 14 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, Flag Hill is not. 15 You're talking about the one behind the school. 16 MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: By the school. Yeah. 17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Flag is Orchid. 18 MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: Okay. So you won't be 19 affecting that bluff by the school there? 20 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Yeah, it would be. 21 AUDIENCE MEMBER: They would on one route, yes. 22 AUDIENCE MEMBER: On the second route. 23 MS. WILLS-MARKGRAF: Okay. When I was reading 24 through it, I assumed that was not going to be chosen because 25 of the Native burials there. I'm from the Lower 48, so I was	1 impacted here by all of the construction traffic that's not on 2 your proposed route. And a lot of our farmers and growers that 3 are out here that -- that's their livelihood, as everyone else 4 here as well. I don't know if you've given consideration of 5 what this impact will have on the community. All the little 6 trails. 7 And I've watched railroads go in all over the 8 country and here in Alaska. And there's little respect given 9 to anything but the rail line, as all your access roads and all 10 the contractors and the rest of that, which is a huge impact on 11 what could or couldn't happen. And the impact and the 12 destruction left behind for the benefit of a rail. I hope 13 that's taken into consideration. I haven't seen it so far in 14 any of your documents, regardless it's 1,100 pages or whatever 15 they are. 16 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Thank you. 17 AUDIENCE MEMBER: You need to clarify the 500 18 feet on state land (indiscernible - away from microphone). 19 MR. NAVECKY: Yeah, the right of way for the 20 rail line would be 200 feet. That's what they would be if the 21 project were approved by the Surface Transportation Board. 22 They would have the authority to construct and operate a rail 23 line within a 200-foot right of way. And I'll let Don explain 24 again the nuances of the 500 foot. 25 MR. PERLIN: And for state lands along the

ca7fec1d51df-4d98-8ba7-38508b00e0e2

ca7fec1d51df-4d98-8ba7-38508b00e0e2

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 105-1	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 105-1
January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 105-1	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 105-1

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 MS. LINCOLN:since the Chena Flood 2 Control project, because that was the salmon runway. 3 MR. DAVIES: There's still salmon in there. 4 AUDIENCE MEMBER: No, there's not. 5 MS. LINCOLN: They can't get out. 6 MR. DAVIES: It goes right into Moose Creek. 7 MS. LINCOLN: Well, it's blocked off at our 8 end. 9 MR. DAVIES: I know it is. 10 MS. LINCOLN: Yeah. So they can't go anywhere. 11 MR. DAVIES: But they come in from Moose Creek. 12 Piledriver goes -- flows into Moose Creek. 13 MS. LINCOLN: Right. 14 MR. DAVIES: It flows into the Tanana. 15 MS. LINCOLN: Right. But that used to be a 16 runoff area. When the water got high, it would come down 17 through there. Never flooded these people up here. And it 18 would run off and go away. That was a pressure relief valve. 19 That was what I was talking about. 20 I'm hoping that they'll take into consideration 21 these pressure relief sloughs, or make another pressure relief 22 runoff area so that this flood water -- we have a lot of 23 problems with ice blockage in the spring. It finds a narrow 24 spot. I'm sure you are well acquainted with all of this, but 25 it finds a narrow spot, blocks up more water, more ice, and catfile141414-428-8a7-3858800ae2	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 more water and more ice. That lady jumps in the bathtub and it 2 all comes into our front yards. It's got to have someplace to 3 go. 4 And the diking of the Piledriver Slough at our 5 end, at the top end, really stopped a lot of that relief that 6 we got, and maybe through your project you can make a different 7 relief avenue and actually help Salcha a lot. And that's what 8 we're hoping for. Thank you. 9 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you again. Anyone else 10 like to speak on the record for us this evening? 11 MS. CURTIS: Well, since everybody else is 12 going twice, I might as well. I just wanted to mention..... 13 MR. NAVECKY: Could you repeat you name again 14 for the court reporter. 15 MS. CURTIS: Yeah. Shelly Curtis. I just want 16 to mention the fact that the comment period actually ends 17 before you decide where the railroad is going. 18 AUDIENCE MEMBER: Really? 19 MS. CURTIS: It ends -- the comment period ends 20 February 2nd. 21 MR. NAVECKY: Correct. 22 MS. CURTIS: But we don't know where the 23 railroad is going. 24 MR. NAVECKY: Well, that's what we're 25 interested in getting your comments on and helping us decide catfile141414-428-8a7-3858800ae2
--	---

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

32

1 which route should be or could be selected.

2 MS. CURTIS: It would help us to make comments
3 if we knew where the railroad was.

4 MR. NAVECKY: Well, yeah, that's kind of.....

5 MS. CURTIS: I just wanted to mention that.

6 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Anyone else?

7 MR. MILLS: Morris, M-o-r-r-i-e. The last name
8 Mills, M-i-l-l-s. Following up on her comment that your
9 closeout date is February 2nd, you still don't know which route
10 for sure. On your time line, if you have one, can you kind of
11 give us an idea when your decision date would be after the
12 public comment period? Thank you.

13 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you. Next? Anyone else?

14 MR. MILLS: No comment?

15 MR. NAVECKY: I was going to wait until at the
16 end, then I'll go back to that. Any other comments on the
17 record?

18 Okay. In reference to the last question on the
19 process, the -- at the end of the comment period, which ends
20 February 2nd, we will then work towards preparing the Final EIS
21 and addressing the comments that we received tonight, at the
22 other public meetings, as well as all the written comments that
23 we receive through the mail and/or through our Web site.

24 After -- then that Final EIS will be issued.

25 You know, it's -- it would be sometime in the next -- no, it

ca/eis/151516-428-8ea7-3856800e02

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

33

1 will be -- my intent is that it would be issued surely this
2 year, and surely by the -- well, I shouldn't say that, then
3 somebody will hold me to it. But by the end of the summer I
4 would expect that the Final EIS would be issued.

5 And then it's up to the board, then, to issue
6 the final decision. The board is a three-member panel that
7 votes on the case. And it's basically the majority rules.
8 It's either the minimum of two have to approve it, or all three
9 unanimously.

10 That decision is typically made in a matter of
11 weeks or months after the Final EIS is issued. It all depends
12 on the issues of the case and the docket, the workload that the
13 board members are currently working under. So that's -- I can
14 just give you that guideline, that range of how soon they might
15 issue a decision after the Final EIS is issued.

16 So putting all that together, then I would
17 expect that that would occur this -- all that would occur this
18 year. And that's based on the assumption that we don't receive
19 any comments from you folks that requires us to go back to
20 square 1 or to go back out in the field this summer or
21 something of that nature. It assumes it can all be addressed
22 by explaining or putting things in a different manner or
23 however we need to address your comments or your questions in
24 the document.

25 MS. LINCOLN: I have a casual question. Do you

ca/eis/151516-428-8ea7-3856800e02

January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 take into consideration all of the research that has been done 2 already by the people that represent the -- we have it 3 simplified, the bridge people and the railroad people. We know 4 they're one and the same, basically. But we're dealing with 5 two factions here. So do you take their input? They've done a 6 lot of work on this. 7 MR. NAVECKY: I don't think I can answer your 8 question, but in order for us to answer your question, if you 9 could clarify for me and for the record who the bridge people 10 are and what work you're referring to. 11 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I think HDR. 12 MS. LINCOLN: HDR, yeah, is one of the entities 13 that have done a lot of work or research, a lot of time on the 14 ground. What was the other one you needed to know? 15 MR. NAVECKY: I think you're referring to the 16 work that's been done by the applicant, in this case, the 17 Alaska Railroad. 18 MS. LINCOLN: Okay. They've been very 19 conscientious, and they've probably got a lot of information 20 that you need to have. 21 MR. NAVECKY: Yes, we've been working -- 22 they've been.... 23 MS. LINCOLN: All right. 24 MR. NAVECKY: Yes. 25 MS. LINCOLN: Okay. Thank you. 34	January 14, 2009 Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 MR. NAVECKY: We haven't done -- we've tried 2 not to work in a vacuum. Yes. 3 AUDIENCE MEMBER: I'm just curious that if you 4 have all this input coming in, I think I've only heard one 5 positive remark tonight from someone. And I don't know how the 6 rest of your meetings have gone, but it seems to me that if the 7 majority rules, they wouldn't be putting that railroad out 8 there on the river. 9 MR. NAVECKY: Yes, I understand. Okay. I 10 think now we'll close the.... 11 MR. LYNNE: Can I make a comment? 12 MR. NAVECKY: Sure. 13 MR. LYNNE: Do I need to.... 14 MR. NAVECKY: Is this a comment you'd like to 15 get formally in the record? 16 MR. LYNNE: Yes. Yes. 17 MR. NAVECKY: Yeah, please come up. If you 18 could state your name and spell your last name for the 19 reporter, please. 20 MR. LYNNE: Victor Lynne, L-y-n-n-e. I have 21 property -- two properties, and the railroad really goes 22 through one of them and just comes right next to the edge of 23 the other property. But I wanted to bring up about the dams 24 that they've built on the Old Piledriver where it -- that you'd 25 talked about. There's three of them out there. 35
--	---

110-1

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

36

1 And I think it was 2001 or '2, I may be off on
2 that. But we had a pretty good flood out in Salcha there on
3 the Old Valdez there, and a lot of them people -- I mean, I
4 could run my boat up and down the road. And the water backed
5 up to those dams, and it was like five feet deep and it
6 couldn't get back to the Tanana side, which is the -- whatever
7 slough that is out there. And I've seen it back up to there
8 and then run around there and go back into the river, but the
9 river was, you know, five foot below grade of the water.

10 And those were put in as a flood control on the
11 Piledriver Slough where it used to run through for when you
12 call -- talk about the overflow. So those were put in for
13 flood control. But they created the big mess we had back in
14 early 2000, 2001, whatever that one was. And so it's really
15 touchy where they put these things. Because maybe they work
16 for a while then, and then later on it creates grief later.

17 MR. NAVICKY: Thank you. Okay. I think we'll
18 close the formal portion the meeting now. The court reporter
19 will stay. If you'd like to provide one-on-one comments to her
20 for the record, she'll be available to do that. And we'll be
21 available to answer any other questions you might have that you
22 want to ask us one on one as well. And I thank you very much
23 for coming tonight.
24 (Off record)
25

cal/ecl/14-0146-426-Sba7-3555880b0e42

110-1

January 14, 2009

Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

37

PUBLIC COMMENTS

1 MR. HOWARD: My name is Will Howard,
2 W-i-l-l H-o-w-a-r-d. My comment is that we really appreciate
3 coming out and giving us information and allowing the comments
4 instead of comment ballots. I know a lot of questions weren't
5 answered, but the fact that they were brought up and this is a
6 place to come and, you know, see some options, some
7 alternatives that they're doing is really an important thing.
8 I very much want to be kept in the loop and keep going along
9 that lines. That's all I really wanted to say. Thanks.
10 (Off record)

11 MS. HOWARD: C-a-r-i-e, Howard, H-o-w-a-r-d.
12 These maps are done horribly. They were very, very, very
13 poorly done. When I'm asking people here to show me where an
14 item is and they're going well, let me see if I can find it,
15 that shows how poorly done the mapping system is for people who
16 want to know how much it's going to affect them in one way or
17 another. When even your own people here couldn't find items
18 for me on the map. They had to go find another book and drag
19 it out to try and locate something because they couldn't show
20 it to me on the map, it was too small.

21 And if they're wanting comments about
22 individual items that affect individual people like a trail
23 system or a -- where a hunting line is and they don't have
24 pictures to be able to show it, how can someone then properly
25

cal/ecl/14-0146-426-Sba7-3555880b0e42

112-1

January 14, 2009	Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 14, 2009	Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
112-1	1 identify something that's going to affect them? The only world 2 that's important to us is our little bitty world, and my little 3 bitty world isn't showing on there. So I wanted to get that in 4 there. And I'm really unhappy. 5 (Off record) 6 MR. PETERSON: Dave Peterson, P-e-t-e-r-s-o-n. 7 I just want to state that I am for Salcha alternative segment 8 1, Tanana River crossing option 1 for the proposed levy option 9 1. That's pretty much it. I'd like to see that happen. 10 (Off record)	114-3	1 major trail in that route that comes from Birch Lake over to 2 the Dry Creek region that I use. 3 South common segment. The issue there would be 4 the access to Rainbow Lake that I use to fish at; make sure 5 that we have a crossing for the public there. And the same on 6 Delta 1, there's a couple trails that cross from the town of 7 Delta that I use to access that land. We need a public access 8 across there. And I guess that's it. Thanks. 9 (END OF PROCEEDINGS) 10 * * * *
113-1	11 MR. REES: Dan Rees, R-e-e-s. I guess I have a 12 concern about Eielson alternative 1 and 2, the taking of 13 private agricultural land in there. I'd prefer to see 14 Eielson 3. I also have concern about Eielson 1 and 2 regarding 15 the extensive trail network in there that gets crossed. How 16 will crossings be dealt with in that area for dog mushing and 17 summer use?	114-1	
114-2	18 And then the Central alternative 2 I'm 19 concerned about with the effect on five-mile Clear Creek, the 20 salmon and grayling in that area that I use. I'm also 21 concerned with all the reappearing white spruce that's in that 22 area. I'd prefer to see Central alternative 1 used and get out 23 of the white spruce area and not affect five-mile Clear Creek. 24 And Donnelly 1, I'm concerned with the trail 25 crossing the -- parallel to the Little Delta River. There's a	114-3	

c:\ecl\eis\4-28-20a7-35558800a02

c:\ecl\eis\4-28-20a7-35558800a02

January 14, 2009	Salcha Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1	40	1	1
2	C E R T I F I C A T E	2	SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
3	UNITED STATES OF AMERICA) ss.	3	TRANSCRIPT OF PUBLIC MEETING
4	STATE OF ALASKA)	4	DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT
5	I, Crystal D. Scotti, Notary Public in and for the	5	FOR THE ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION'S
6	State of Alaska, residing at North Pole, Alaska, and electronic	6	PROPOSED NORTHERN RAIL EXTENSION PROJECT
7	reporter for Liz D'Amour & Associates, Inc., do hereby certify:	7	FINANCE DOCKET 35095
8	That the annexed and foregoing Public Meeting was taken	8	
9	before me on the 14th day of January 2009, beginning at the	9	
10	hour of 5:00 P.M., at Salcha Senior Center, 6062 Johnson Road,	10	Delta Junction, Alaska
11	Salcha, Alaska;	11	January 15, 2009
12	That this meeting, as heretofore annexed, is a true and	12	5:00 P.M.
13	correct transcription of the testimony of all parties, taken by	13	
14	me and thereafter transcribed by me;	14	
15	That the transcript has been retained by me for the	15	
16	purpose of filing the same with Ms. Melissa Elefante DuMond,	16	
17	Project Manager, ICF International, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax,	17	
18	Virginia 22031;	18	APPEARANCES:
19	That I am not a relative or employee or attorney or	19	Mr. Dave Navecky, Surface Transportation Board
20	counsel of any of the parties, nor am I financially interested	20	Mr. Don Perrin, Alaska Department of Natural Resources
21	in this action.	21	Mr. Alan Summerville, ICF
22	IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and	22	Ms. Melissa Elefante DuMond, ICF
23	affixed my seal this 26th day of January 2009.	23	Mr. Dave Johnson, ICF
24		24	Mr. Mike Nagy, ENTRIX
25		25	

Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010

Crystal D. Scotti
NOTARY PUBLIC
STATE OF ALASKA

SEAL

0053846-7698-4350-8662-76963565267

16302935-1001-4055-9103-40665304966

January 15, 2009 Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 MR. NAVECKY: Good evening, everyone. I think 3 we're ready to begin this evening's meeting. My name is 4 Dave Navecky with the Surface Transportation Board. And this 5 evening's meeting is to receive comments on the 6 Alaska Railroad's Proposed Northern Rail Extension, which would 7 extend their current main line from near North Pole down to 8 Delta Junction. 9 The board -- the Surface Transportation Board 10 is the federal agency within the government responsible for 11 authorizing railroads to construct and operate their rail lines 12 within the United States. The railroad filed a petition or 13 application with my agency in July of 2007 requesting the 14 authority to construct this railroad, and the board took the 15 lead in preparing the national -- the Environmental Impact 16 Statement under the National Environmental Policy Act. 17 The purpose of the Environmental Impact 18 Statement, or EIS, is to identify and disclose potential 19 impacts of the project and make those results available to the 20 public and agencies for review and comment. And, of course, 21 we're here tonight to receive your comments on the 22 Draft Environmental Impact Statement. 23 The meeting tonight will occur, and there will 24 be two formats. The initial format will be a formal meeting in 25 which we will receive oral comments from individuals interested	January 15, 2009 Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 in speaking to the group formally. Your comments will be 2 recorded by a court reporter, and those transcripts will be 3 entered into the record and considered during the preparation 4 for the Final Environmental Impact Statement. 5 After we've run through the list of individuals 6 that would like to speak formally, we will adjourn that portion 7 of the meeting and then break off, and we will be free to 8 answer any questions one on one with you that you may have 9 about the project. More likely on the process of the project. 10 We may not know necessarily all the answers off the top of our 11 head on the details of the document. If you've seen the EIS 12 itself, it's a two-volume, 1,100-page document, and my memory 13 isn't that good. 14 And for those individuals who may be 15 interested, the court reporter will stay in the room if you'd 16 be more comfortable providing comments to her one on one rather 17 than in front of the group, and she will also transcribe your 18 comments as well. 19 The process, our environmental review process, 20 began approximately four years ago when the railroad initially 21 contacted my agency, the Surface Transportation Board, 22 expressing an interest in constructing this rail line. They 23 presented to us the whole, what we refer to as a spaghetti bowl 24 set of potential alignments that they had been studying over 25 the past year or two, and have been studied in the past by
--	---

January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1	others, and kind of gave those as our -- what they were	1	period closes, we will then take all those comments, and we
2	suggesting as our suite of alignments to select for	2	will address those comments in the Final Environmental Impact
3	alternatives to evaluate in the EIS.	3	Statement.
4	At that point we did not make any decision on	4	Within the Final Environmental Impact
5	alternatives, but we began a process called scoping. And the	5	Statement, my agency -- or actually the section that I work for
6	purpose of scoping is to collect comments from the public and	6	in the agency, referred to as the Section of Environmental
7	the agencies on issues that should be considered in the EIS,	7	Analysis, will identify the environmentally preferred
8	potential impacts that should be addressed in the	8	alternative. The document is currently absent -- or silent on
9	Environmental Impact Statement, alternatives that should be	9	that issue. And we will then recommend -- also recommend a
10	considered in the Environmental Impact Statement.	10	suite of mitigation measures, and those recommendations are
11	And we received written comments during that	11	going to the actual three-member Surface Transportation Board.
12	process. And we also had public scoping meetings during that	12	The Surface Transportation Board will then take
13	scoping phase. And, in fact, we were in this very same room	13	the Final Environmental Impact Statement, the
14	for the scoping meeting we held here in Delta Junction. We	14	Draft Environmental Impact Statement, and all the comments that
15	then took all those comments from individuals, the public and	15	were received during our environmental review process and make
16	the agencies, and finalized a scope of study for preparation of	16	a decision on whether or not to license the construction and
17	the Draft Environmental Impact Statement.	17	operation of the rail line.
18	And it was that scope of study that guided our	18	If they choose to issue the license, they will
19	efforts over the next year or two on data we needed to collect,	19	identify which alternative the railroad has the authority to
20	analyses we needed to complete, and the impacts we needed to	20	construct and operate, and they will also choose which of the
21	review and disclose in the Draft Environmental Impact	21	environmental mitigation measures we recommended that they
22	Statement. And that Draft Environmental Impact Statement, as	22	adopt. Or they may also identify their own mitigation measures
23	you may know, was issued last month, in December of 2008.	23	that they may come up with as they review the Draft and
24	And we have a comment period for that draft	24	Final EISs and the comments in the record.
25	document that extends through February 2nd. After the comment	25	For tonight's meeting, we are interested in

16326335-1041-4655-6103-496d833d5606

16326335-1041-4655-6103-496d833d5606

January 15, 2009 Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 receiving your comments on the project across the board. We'd 2 like to hear any comments you may have on the alternatives, if 3 you support the project. We would like to hear which 4 alternative you may prefer, if you have a preference. And it 5 would be most helpful to us if you identify a preference, the 6 reasons behind your preference. That will be very valuable to 7 us. If you oppose the project, we would also like to hear your 8 reasons for opposing the project. That helps us understand 9 where you're coming from and what you're concerns are. 10 We would also like to hear from you in the area 11 of mitigation. The document identified a fairly lengthy list 12 of preliminary mitigation measures. If you think we should 13 have additional mitigation measures, we'd like to hear from you 14 on what those might be. If you'd like the existing mitigation 15 measures revised to, you think, would be something more 16 appropriate, we'd like to hear about that as well. 17 Again, that's a lot to provide us in your oral 18 comments. And we would also encourage you, if you feel it 19 would serve you appropriately, to provide us written comments. 20 And the written comments are due, again, on February 2nd. 21 Those written comments may be provided to us by mailing those 22 to us. And those need to be postmarked by February 2nd. You 23 may also provide us written comments through our Web site, and 24 we simply need to receive those comments through our Web site 25 by the end of the day on February 2nd.	January 15, 2009 Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 Let's see if I'm forgetting something here. 2 There were a number of other federal and state agencies that 3 assisted us in the preparation of this Draft Environmental 4 Impact Statement, and through the environmental review process. 5 Those agencies either have permits to issue for the project, or 6 they have some type of approval or a grant that they need to 7 issue for the project. If the board were to approve the 8 licensing and construction of the project, the railroad would 9 still need to obtain those permits, approvals, or grants before 10 they can proceed with the construction and operation of the 11 railroad. 12 Those agencies that specifically assisted us on 13 the project as cooperating agencies are the U.S. Department of 14 Defense, Alaskan Command, the Bureau of Land Management, the 15 U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Federal Railroad 16 Administration, the Federal Transit Administration, the 17 United States Coast Guard, and the Alaska Department of Natural 18 Resources. 19 Sitting to my right is Don Perrin with the 20 Alaska Department of Natural Resources. They also have a 21 slightly different role on the project, and that's why Don is 22 up here. And the Alaska Department of Natural Resources is 23 a -- although all the cooperating agencies are sponsoring 24 tonight's public meeting, DNR has a unique role in the meeting, 25 and I'll let Don explain what that is.
--	--

1532935-101-455-5103-d6d630606

1532935-101-455-5103-d6d630606

January 15, 2009 Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 MR. PERRIN: Thanks, Dave. Hi. I'm Don Perrin with 2 the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources. And as 3 Dave said, DNR is a cooperating agency with the EIS, and we've 4 been working with the railroad and the STB and other agencies 5 to try to identify environmental concerns as well as right of 6 way and access concerns to minimize impacts on where folks go 7 and how they use the area. 8 In addition to being a cooperating agency in 9 the NEPA process, we're also entrusted with implementing a 10 state law that was passed in 2004 entitled Extension of the 11 Alaska Railroad. Now, that law allows the railroad to identify 12 a 500-foot-wide corridor from roughly North Pole all the way to 13 the Canadian border. At this time they've identified a 14 corridor from North Pole to Delta Junction. And at which time 15 they are licensed and construct the rail, then DNR will convey 16 200 foot of that corridor to the railroad, 100 foot either side 17 of the centerline, for operation of the rail. 18 Before DNR can reserve that corridor, we need 19 to make a finding, and we need to consult with affected 20 parties, including you folks, the public, on whether or not the 21 location of the rail line minimizes adverse effects on existing 22 rights of way and uses, and also whether or not it would affect 23 the construction, location, and operation of a gas pipeline. 24 So as I said, the railroad has done some 25 initial analysis, and they've submitted us their proposed route	January 15, 2009 Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings 1 that they want us to reserve. So what we're doing right now is 2 trying to consult with affected parties and find out where they 3 go and where they could be impacted by this rail. And 4 particularly in terms of access for hunting, fishing, trapping, 5 and other uses. 6 Once we've crafted what we call a proposed 7 decision that will include all the information we've collected 8 to date, in addition to locations that we think, after 9 consulting with you folks, need to be -- that the railroad 10 needs to provide crossings for, we will issue this proposed 11 decision and offer a 30-day public notice so folks can comment 12 back to us on what they think of it. 13 After that period, we'll analyze the comments 14 and we'll issue a final decision reserving the corridor. And 15 at this point we've just reserved the corridor. We have not 16 conveyed the land yet. So as I said earlier, we'll net down 17 the 500 feet to 200 feet, at which time the railroad actually 18 constructs the rail. 19 As Dave said, the project would require 20 numerous other state and federal permits, Fish & Game, stream 21 crossings, and right of ways for crossing navigable waters. 22 For these meetings we're interested in where you folks go, how 23 you get there, what do you use, and when do you go. And this 24 is not the only opportunity that you'll have, or that we'll 25 have to try to get information from you.
--	--

15320305-1201-4655-8103-4668303606

15320305-1201-4655-8103-4668303606

January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25	1 But we do have some maps in the back of the 10 2 room, and AJ can help you with those. And if you have time, if 3 you could take one of the markers there and just write down -- 4 indicate where you go and where your access points are across 5 the rail, that will help us try to collectively figure out 6 where the best places are to keep folks going where they 7 traditionally have gone. 8 And if you have any questions about this DNR 9 involvement in this process, I'd offer you to call the Division 10 of Mining, Land and Water in Fairbanks at 451-2740. And that's 11 all I have at this point. Thanks. 12 MR. NAVECKY: Thanks, Don. So we'll begin in 13 the oral comments in a moment. I just wanted to just point out 14 that the oral comments and written comments are considered 15 equally, so if you don't speak this evening, that's no problem 16 for us. If you do speak this evening, you're certainly welcome 17 to submit written comments as well. We don't put any limit on 18 your method in which you provide your comments. 19 So far we only have a couple people signed up 20 to speak formally. When I call your name, if you could come to 21 the front of the room over here to my right. We have a couple 22 microphones. In addition to her transcribing away over there, 23 she also is recording it so she can catch anything she may miss 24 as she's typing. Come to the front of the room, state your 25 full name, and spell your last name for us if you could.
January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25	1 And again, we're looking for comments. After 11 2 we've completed the formal portion of the meeting, we'll break 3 up, and we'll be happy to try and answer any questions you may 4 have one on one related to the process or where we're going 5 from now or any of that nature. Let's see, the first person is 6 Peter Hallgren. 7 MR. HALLGREN: That's me. 8 MR. NAVECKY: If I pronounced it correctly, I 9 hope. 10 MR. HALLGREN: Yeah, that was pretty good. My 11 name is Peter S. Hallgren, H-a-l-l-g-r-e-n, and I'm the mayor 12 pro tem of the city of Delta Junction. We've got the mayor 13 here. And we have Dolly here, too. And we were authorized by 14 the city council to come and make the city council's comments. 15 So that's what I'm going to do. 16 MR. NAVECKY: Very good. 17 MR. HALLGREN: In essence, the city council 18 strongly supports the rail extension to Delta Junction on 19 Delta 1, alternative 1. And we have major concerns over the 20 Delta 2 alternative route. So I guess in short, if Delta 1 is 21 chosen, many of our concerns -- that's the one that goes down 22 to Jarvis Creek on the other side of the Delta River, and it 23 doesn't go right through the city limits. So if Delta 1 is 24 chosen, that would mitigate most of our concerns, environmental 25 concerns on this project.

115-1

January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
115-1	1 So Delta 2 through the middle of the city 12 2 boundaries would cause needless safety, noise, and vibration 3 irritants to Deltans that are avoided by utilizing Delta 1. 4 And I noticed in here that you say there are no real noise or 5 vibration irritants, but I -- no adversely affected noise 6 vibration receptors. 7 However, if you're going to put a railroad 8 right through the middle of town, you're going to have three 9 main grade crossings, all three of the paved exits to the town 10 area from the Richardson Highway. It appears that you would be 11 crossing Tanana Loop Extension, Jack Warren, and Nistler Road. 12 Those are the three main paved roads that we've got. If you go 13 through there, you're going to be having warning noise -- 14 warning horns. 15 And I don't think it would probably be too bad 16 right now, but we look and see the problems that the city of 17 Fairbanks has. And not to say that Delta ever would or would 18 want to become the size of the city of Fairbanks, ultimately 19 the -- a lot of people hope to connect to the continental rail 20 system. In which case we would likely see long freight trains 21 coming up going through Delta. They would have to slow down, 22 they would have to cross those three grades. 23 If you ended up with a freight train with 100 24 or 200 or 300 cars going through, you would be greatly 25 hindering the ambulance, fire, commuters to work in town, and
115-2	1 school busses, depending on when they would come through. And 13 2 it would be adding a lot of noise. 3 There are no easy ways to go if one of those 4 three roads is blocked to -- if Jack Warren is blocked, you 5 have to go miles out of your way to get around. If Nistler is 6 blocked, you have to go miles out of your way to get around. 7 And if Tanana Loop Extension is blocked, you have to go miles 8 out of your way to get around. So those would be major worries 9 for us on a good number of reasons. 10 Vibrations can be interesting around here. 11 We're used to shelling and bombing at the range. And a number 12 of people are used to their houses vibrating when there are 13 bombs going off several miles away. I know that on our unpaved 14 streets in town when we run the roller to pack things down, you 15 can often feel it several blocks away in your house. So 16 vibration isn't necessarily something that we wouldn't worry 17 about here. It's something that's noticed. 18 We would like to avoid the many problems 19 Fairbanks is having right now. If we're ever connected to the 20 continental rail system, it would be so much better with having 21 the railroad on the other side of the Delta River and cross at 22 Jarvis Creek. It wouldn't slow the rails down, it wouldn't 23 impact the public here. 24 And both of the alternatives have the same -- 25 you know, the same spot for a terminal here in Delta on the
115-3	

January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
115-3	1 Alaska Highway. So the one we really like is Delta 1. Delta 2 2 appears to be highly problematic for us. 3 A number of other issues, it appears to us -- I 4 mean, we're not military, but we live here, and it appears to 5 us that the Striker Brigade training areas, the access on the 6 other side of the Delta River would be much better for the 7 military if it were at the Delta 1 alternative with the river 8 crossing at Jarvis Creek. So I point that out. 9 The city council generally likes to take the 10 time, wherever we're given the time, to say that we do not 11 support high-speed commuter as a means of having soldiers who 12 serve at Fort Greely live in Fairbanks. We can come up with a 13 whole pile of reasons why we don't think it's good. We're not 14 trying to tell the military their job, but it appears to be a 15 bad idea, not just economically, but also for the services that 16 they provide. 17 I think somewhere in here you mention that 18 there is no public transport between Delta and Fairbanks. 19 There actually is. For many years there's been a van that goes 20 up -- a public van that goes up on a daily basis during the 21 weekdays. And that still continues. 22 Lastly, we have some concerns, and we'd like to 23 have those addressed further. Concerns about restricted in 24 crossing the tracks for hunters and recreationists. When we 25 read in there that you wouldn't be able to cross the tracks and	115-5	1 go down the right of way except at designated spots, that 2 probably won't sit too well with a whole lot of people. So 3 anyway, that's -- we would like that further explored. So 4 thank you very much. 5 MR. NAVECKY: Thank you for your comments. 6 Next is Mary Leith-Dowling. 7 MS. LEITH-DOWLING: Well, he just gave my whole 8 speech. Here's my name, Mary Leith-Dowling. And I'm mayor of 9 Delta Junction, and I -- basically I'm confirming what he just 10 said. The council has taken the stand that we are in favor of 11 this. We think it would be a very positive -- going to have a 12 very positive effect to our community. 13 It would hopefully keep some of the convoys off 14 the road when you're driving to Fairbanks, which is something 15 that we would love to see. Most of this part of the world 16 would like to see that you don't have to get caught behind 17 convoys. 18 And there is some concern about how many 19 passenger transports per day and what possible negative 20 effects, even though we all like the positives of it that you 21 could get on a passenger transport and leave your car in 22 Delta Junction and go to Fairbanks and catch a plane and know 23 that your car is in the garage and catch the ride back, we're 24 all pretty positive about that. So that's a real plus. 25 And the access to the other side of the river.
115-4	14	116-1	15
115-5	14		15

15302935-1261-455-6163-6466339656

15302935-1261-455-6163-6466339656

January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings	January 15, 2009	Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting Transcript of Proceedings
1 Already I've had several people tell me, you mean they're going 2 to build a bridge across the river and there's no way we can 3 get over there when there's land that we have over there? And 4 finally there's something that would hopefully make it so that 5 we could -- you know, we could get to it? And I've had several 6 people say that to me, so this obviously is a -- you know, 7 there's quite a bit of this feel in the community. 8 And so I just want to confirm that the city of 9 Delta Junction is in favor, and we really would rather not have 10 number 2 and having you crossing all of the major paved roads. 11 And, you know, we've taken a stand that number 1 is the only 12 one we're in favor of.	16	116-1	17 PUBLIC COMMENTS 18 STEVE JOSLIN: Steve Joslin, J-o-s-l-i-n. 19 Let's see, I'm with the State of Alaska Division of Forestry, 20 and we have been putting in access throughout the Delta area 21 for access in timber sales. And we would like to see access 22 accommodated for the road crossings, timber sales, the ones 23 that are already there, plus some that are planned for the 24 future. 25 And we'd like to see the bare minimum for the Delta River crossing would be a -- at least a single land bridge with -- that's open to state business. And it could be gated. Once we get to the other side we can build our own roads, but it would be nice if there is a road there. That's it. The same thing would apply down by Delta Creek and Delta Road.
13 MR. NAVECKY: Okay. Thank you for your 14 comments. Okay. Those are the only two individuals that had 15 signed up to speak formally. Is there anyone else that would 16 like to come up and speak formally? Calling once, calling 17 twice. 18 Okay. We'll then close the formal portion of 19 tonight's meeting. And again, the court reporter will remain 20 here in case you'd like to speak with her one on one and not in 21 front of an audience of folks. And we will also be available 22 to answer any questions you may have about the -- our 23 environmental review process and where we're going to go from 24 here. Thank you very much for coming this evening. 25 (Off record)	16	118-1	MR. MORRIS: Jack Morris, M-o-r-r-i-s. And the comment I was making, I'm all in favor of the railroad coming through. I hope someday it goes on into Canada. The one thing that I -- when Pogo went in, we voiced our opinions to have the road not a public road going to the Pogo. And we view the railroad the same. The river crossings at the Tanana and at the Jarvis not to be open for the general public. The state, the federal, you know, people with a business and stuff like that on the railroad, but not just an open gate that the general public can go in.

15302935-1161-4955-6163-e6ed6329666

15302935-1161-4955-6163-e6ed6329666

January 15, 2009

Delta Junction Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

18

1 The environment over there as far as erosion
2 goes because of the wetlands, the military is already in there,
3 and the game populations, it just won't take that kind of
4 abuse. And so if there's any way not allow general public
5 usage of the right of ways across the rivers, both on the
6 Tanana and the Jarvis. Like, forestry, you know, they build
7 their own roads over there and anything else. The military,
8 they can do theirs and stuff like that. They can use that
9 crossing, but not the general public. That's what we want to
10 keep off this. Okay? Thank you.

(END OF PROCEEDINGS)

* * * *

118-1

January 15, 2009

Delta Surface Transportation Meeting
Transcript of Proceedings

19

1 C E R T I F I C A T E
2 UNITED STATES OF AMERICA)
3 STATE OF ALASKA) ss.
4 I, Crystal D. Scotti, Notary Public in and for the
5 State of Alaska, residing at North Pole, Alaska, and electronic
6 reporter for Liz D'Amour & Associates, Inc., do hereby certify:
7 That the annexed and foregoing Public Meeting was taken
8 before me on the 15th day of January 2009, beginning at the
9 hour of 5:00 p.m., at Jarvis West Building, Milepost 1420.5
10 Alaska Highway, Delta Junction, Alaska,
11 That this meeting, as heretofore annexed, is a true and
12 correct transcription of the testimony of all parties, taken by
13 me and thereafter transcribed by me;
14 That the transcript has been retained by me for the
15 purpose of filing the same with Ms. Melissa Elefante DuMond,
16 Project Manager, ICF International, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax,
17 Virginia 22031;
18 That I am not a relative or employee or attorney or
19 counsel of any of the parties, nor am I financially interested
20 in this action.
21 IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and
22 affixed my seal this 26th day of January 2009.



Crystal D. Scotti
Notary Public in and for Alaska
My Commission Expires: 9/15/2010

18302035-1301-4855-9153-d4ed032656

e5c258e-5d68-4893-94d7-559924114b41