

E1-18154



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cc
bcc
Subject Rail Extension - STB Finance Document No. 35095

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May 10, 2010

David Navecky
STB Finance Docket No. 35095
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423

REFERENCE: Rail Extension

Dear Sir:

Once again, you have allowed the fox to give you a report on the chickens in the hen house and once again you have come up with inaccurate, flawed information. The Borough administration has manipulated this process from the start. Their whole goal was to get the shortest, least expensive route. They have guided the DNR to use 4(f) as a tool to direct the STB in their preferred route with a total disregard for the long term economic benefits of Alaska and the wishes of the general public.

It recently came to the attention of the Transportation Advisory Board of the Mat-Su Borough that there currently exists a rail corridor through the agricultural area of Point MacKenzie. This corridor lies between Mac East and Mac West. The fact that this corridor exists shows a rushed, premature and flawed effort without proper planning and looking at all options.

We need to slow this process down and look realistically at our options. The State of Alaska has many precedents in which State owned land, when necessary for the economic development of Alaska, has done land swaps, lot

line readjustment and other methods to allow for utilities and transportation corridors. The current rail line has been in place for 95 years. Before putting in another line, we need to look long term. We need to focus on the economics and environmental future of Alaska. We need to look at the route with the least train energy, best safety factor, the best soils and the least loss of emergent wetlands, not just for this rail extension but for future transportation and utilities corridors.

The rail extension was originally proposed to get coal to Agrium before they were forced to close. That did not happen but we are still working on this rushed, poorly planned agenda. The long term economics of Alaska depends on proper planning. We need to tie any future rail extension into a long term transportation plan. This plan must include not only this rail extension but also a future utilities corridor as well as a road system to open up future development of natural resources and recreation for residents and Alaska's growing tourism.

At this time, I recommend that you make a decision for "No Build". The Borough Administration only looked at short term. The only route they have manipulated (Houston South) is not in the best interest of Alaska's citizens or its economy. While this corridor remains the cheapest to build it has no ability to be used as a transportation or utilities corridor nor does it allow for future commercial or industrial development.

Sincerely yours,

Sharon L. Berg