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El - 16398
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February 2, 2009

Mr. David Navecky
STB Finance Docket No. 34658
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington DC 20423-0001

Dear Mr. Navecky,

I have reviewed the proposed Northern Rail Extension project for the Alaska Railroad between Fairbanks and Delta Junction, Alaska and have numerous concerns. The preferred route has a direct negative impact on property that I own on the Five Mile Clearwater. The preferred route also has a negative impact on about 40 other property owners that use the Five Mile Clearwater for recreational purposes in the summer and fall, not to mention the hundreds of other users that frequent the creek for sport fishing and hunting in the summer and fall of the year.

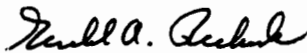
1. My first concern is related to the future access to the 5 mile Clearwater. To the extent the plans for this section of the railroad and the related crossing of the Tanana River end up affecting the water levels for access to the creek, this will create a major problem. I would strongly recommend you consider moving the crossing slightly North to avoid changing the approach or entry to the 5 mile Clearwater.
2. There is an alternate route that takes the railroad South of the 5 mile Clearwater. From my personal perspective and that of all the property owners on the 5 Mile Clearwater, this alternate route would be a much preferable route as there would be less interactions and crossings of the creek and the noise level for the property owners would be reduced considerably.
3. The current preferred route looks like it goes right through the middle of my property that I own on the 5 mile Clearwater. If that is the case, I would probably end up losing my property to some form of eminent domain or something. I do not want to sell or have my property taken from me. I value my property very highly and it just simply cannot be replaced with anything comparable. I have looked for many years in the Interior and have plans to build a summer retirement home on the property that I own on the 5 mile Clearwater. The Railroads preferred route would take away a dream of mine.

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4. Access across the proposed extension of the railroad is another major concern of mine. I only see access being allowed at limited points on the proposed plan. This would cut off access to the Tanana Flats from the crossing at the Tanana River to Delta except for the few limited access points that show on the map. This is a huge recreational area that consists of hundreds of thousands of acres of land. Any plans for the Railroad Extension must take into consideration the historic use and trails that have been used by Alaskans for decades. To offer any less access would be comparable to the locking up of ANWAR by the Carter administration.

I am sorry I cannot say more positive things about the proposed extension plan. The reality is that if the Railroad is extended following the current preferred route directly adjacent to the 5 mile Clearwater, then my current and future lifestyle will be greatly diminished. Thank you for considering my comments.

Sincerely,



Gerald A. Richards