



EI - 18871

March 26, 2012

James Helfinstine
District Bridge Program Manager
U.S. Coast Guard
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ENGINEERING SERVICES
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Subject: ARRC Northern Rail Extension Rail Extension, Bridge over the Tanana River

Dear Mr. Helfinstine:

The Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) provided you a permit application under Section 9, River and Harbors Act, in June 7th, 2010 regarding the construction of a second bridge over the Tanana River, near Salcha, Alaska. Upon further review of the situation, we believe construction of this bridge is covered under 33 CFR Section 115.70, Advance Approval of Bridges, which states:

"The Commandant has given his advance approval to the location and plans of bridges to be constructed across reaches of waterways navigable in law, but not actually navigated other than by logs, log rafts, rowboats, canoes and small motorboats. In such cases the clearances provided for high water stages will be considered adequate to meet the reasonable needs of navigation."

The proposed bridge structure has a larger navigational opening than what is otherwise required to facilitate existing river traffic. Boat traffic through this section of river is relatively light. Documentation collected during the NEPA process indicated that traffic is predominantly air-boat and occasional smaller craft with outboard motors. The swift-moving braided river, severely limits the size of boats able to navigate the river in the project area, nor does the river in this area provide for sail boat traffic. We therefore believe that no further regulatory action is required of the Coast Guard in this matter prior to start of construction later this year.

If we do not hear from you within five business-days of the receipt of this letter, ARRC will proceed under the advance approval provisions of Section 115.70. Please be advised that construction for this large project commenced last year, bridge construction is expected to start this summer.

Please contact me at (907) 265-3095 if you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Lindamood, PE
Director, Capital Projects



Cc:

Admiral Robert J. Papp, JR (USCG)
Rear Admiral Thomas P. Ostebo (USCG)
Rear Admiral Christopher Colvin (USCG)
Col. Reinhard W. Koenig (USACE)
Ellen Lyons (USACE)
David Navecky (Surface Transportation Board)
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