



July 27, 2012

Judith Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
550 W. 7th Ave., Suite 1310
Anchorage, AK 99501-3565

Catherine Glidden
Environmental Protection Specialist
Office of Environmental Analysis
Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street SW
Washington, DC 20423

Re: Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (36 CFR 800) Compliance
Port MacKenzie Rail Extension Project – Segment 5

Dear Ms. Bittner and Ms. Glidden:

In May 2012, in accordance with the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension (PMRE) Programmatic Agreement (PA), the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC), the Matanuska Susitna Borough, and the Knik Tribal Council (KTC), collectively referred to as the Working Group, evaluated the need for archaeological surveys within the Area of Potential Effect (APE) associated with Segment 5. This letter requests your concurrence that no further surveys are needed in this segment.

During a conference call on Friday, June 20, 2012, the Working Group, the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) and Surface Transportation Board (STB) discussed the need for additional surveys in Segment 5. Representatives of HDR Alaska, Inc., ICF International, and Stephen R. Braund and Associates (SRBA) also participated in the discussion.

According to the PA (Stipulation III.B.2.d) and the Working Group Memorandum of Understanding (MOU; Section 5.B.1) developed in consultation with SHPO and STB, surveys are to be conducted in moderate and high probability areas and selected low probability areas based on the probability mapping conducted by SRBA. During the conference call, the following relevant considerations were discussed regarding future surveys in Segment 5 (see attached figure):

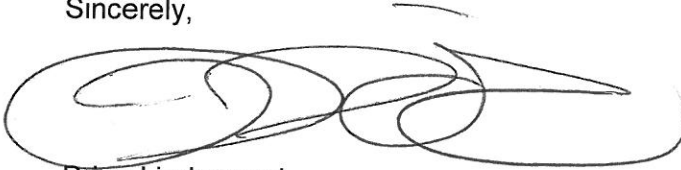
- Per the SRBA probability mapping, there are no moderate and high probability areas in Segment 5.
- A review of August 2011 aerial video footage indicated no areas of interest for survey.

- No surveys will be conducted in wetlands which comprise a portion of Segment 5.
- Segment 5 is within the Millers Reach Fire extent. Damage to this area from the Millers Reach Fire was confirmed by the aerial video footage.
- Conditions in Segment 5 were observed to be similar to the southern end of Segment 6. It is likely that the fire destroyed any above ground cultural resources and downed trees would make identification of subsurface resources difficult. Survey of heavily impacted areas within the Millers Reach Fire extent would be hazardous due to downed and falling trees and would not likely allow for the identification of previously undocumented archaeological resources.

Based on these considerations, the Working Group recommends that no further archaeological surveys are needed in Segment 5. Please provide your written concurrence by **August 27, 2012**. If we do not hear from you by that date, your concurrence will be assumed.

If you have any questions, please contact me at the address above, at (907) 265-3095, or by email at LindamoodB@akrr.com. You may also contact Barbara Hotchkin at (907) 265-2313 or hotchkinb@akrr.com.

Sincerely,



Brian Lindamood
ARRC Project Manager

Enclosures:
Probability Map for Segment 5

cc:

Victoria Rutson, STB
Shina duVall, OHA
Brad Sworts, MSB
Barbara Hotchkin, ARRC
Fran Seager-Boss, MSB
Richard Porter, KTC
Elizabeth Grover, HDR
Richard Starzak, ICF
Kathryn Kusske Floyd, Dorsey & Whitney, LLP