

EI-16334

Rec'd. 1/13/09
DCN

January 13, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Navecky:

The Eielson farm community is pleased to have received and be able to comment on the draft Environmental Impact Statement, STB Finance Docket No. 34658, for the construction and operation of a rail line between North Pole and Delta Junction. Our concern is the routing that impacts the Eielson agricultural area and identified in the draft as the Eielson alternatives 1- 3.

The Eielson farm community supports the Eielson Segment 3 Alternative. It is the alternative supported in our November 7, 2005 letter to the STB and again supported in our May 10, 2006 letter to the STB. We are pleased that this routing is identified in the draft as the Applicant's (Alaska Railroad) preferred routing. We continue to support this routing as it best meets the needs of both the railroad and the Eielson Farm community.

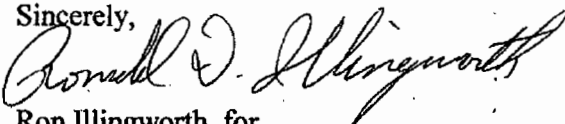
The Eielson farm community does not support the two alternative routings identified as Eielson Segment Alternative 1 and Eielson Segment Alternative 2. These two routings negatively impact the Eielson farm community. We are concerned that Table 8-2 (Summary and Comparison of Potential Impacts) does not fully measure the number of farm acres lost for farming under alternatives 1 and 2. Table 8-2 counts just two acres lost with these routings. Our assumption is that only currently cropped acreage that would lie directly under the track after construction is counted in Table 8-2.

Our review suggests that approximately 50 acres would be lost. This includes the farm acreage split from the remainder of a farm after track construction. Without constructed crossings, this acreage would be unavailable to the farm owner after the railroad has split a farm.

Again, the Eielson farm community supports the Eielson Segment 3 alternative. We do not support Eielson Segment alternatives 1 or 2.

Thank you for opportunity to comment.

Sincerely,



Ron Illingworth, for
Eielson Farm Community

REF: Alaska Railroad—Northern Rail Extension—Eielson to Ft. Greely

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