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Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

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January 30, 2009

Mr. David Navecky

STB Finance Docket No. 34658

Surface Transportation Board

395 E St SW

Washington, DC 20423-0001

Re: Alaska Railroad Corporation Construction and Operation of a Rail Line between North Pole, Alaska and Delta Junction, Alaska

Dear Mr. Navecky,

The Resource Development Council writes to express support for the construction and operation of a Rail Line by Alaska Railroad Corporation between North Pole, Alaska, and Delta Junction, Alaska, referred to as the Northern Rail Extension (NRE).

RDC is a statewide, non-profit, membership-funded organization founded in 1975. The RDC membership is comprised of individuals and companies from Alaska's oil and gas, mining, timber, tourism, and fisheries industries, as well as Alaska Native corporations, local communities, organized labor, and industry support firms. RDC's purpose is to link these diverse interests together to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our natural resources.

The Alaska Railroad network begins in Seward, Alaska and travels north through Anchorage, continues to Fairbanks and ends at Eielson Air Force Base. The purpose of the NRE is to extend the Railroad's existing service, both freight and passenger, to areas southeast of the Fairbanks area. Expansion of this service would provide an alternative route to the Richardson Highway, for travelers and commercial freight between Fairbanks and Delta Junction. Rail lines are less susceptible to severe weather conditions than highways, increasing the ability to deliver goods and services at all times. Additionally, an expanded rail line would promote tourism to areas not currently part of the Railroad grid. Thousands of tourists travel from Seward to Fairbanks on the Alaska Railroad during summer months, and could continue their travels even further given the availability of appropriate infrastructure.

The Alaska Railroad has always been a good corporate citizen; strongly protecting Alaska's environment and supporting its economy and residents. It is for these reasons that construction and operation of the Northern Rail Expansion be allowed to proceed.

Thank you for the opportunity to give comment on this important issue.

Sincerely,

Deantha Crockett

Projects Coordinator