

EI - 18212

MEMORANDUM

To: Friends of the Lakes

Re: Port MacKenzie Route Rail Extension: STB Docket No. 35095

Fr: Greg Strong

Da: April 2, 2008

Please use the attached comparison when discussing this issue with your family, friends and neighbors.

Cc: All State and Federal Regulatory Agencies

Alaska Railroad -- Point MacKenzie Expansion

*****Support the Willow Route*****

**Willow Route is the best choice for
Alaska Railroad Expansion to Point MacKenzie.**

Why? It:

- ✦ Is best route for development of Enstar's natural gas "bullet" line into Southcentral Alaska.¹
- ✦ Is the safest as it eliminates dangerous traffic on the Parks Highway.²
- ✦ Opens land for development creating more tax base for the Mat-Su Borough and economic development opportunities for its citizens.³
- ✦ Provides the least impact to private Big Lake area landowners.⁴
- ✦ Is supported by business, community groups.⁵
- ✦ Is the preferred route of local government.⁶
- ✦ Has the least impact on the environment.⁷
- ✦ Was selected as the best route by the Alaska Railroad itself in 2003.⁸

1. The Willow corridor will expedite the construction of the "bullet line" for Enstar Natural Gas to all parts of Southcentral Alaska from the North.
2. The Willow Route redirects large truck/heavy equipment traffic off the Parks Highway. Currently Mile 53 to Church Road is considered the "most dangerous" in the State of Alaska. (report citation) The Willow Route is NOT located along any earthquake faults. It has the most favorable soils, the least potential for harming wetlands, lakes, rivers and streams, less disruption of ecosystems, least impact on the human quality of life.
3. The creation of Willow Corridor will open thousands of acres of Mat-Su Borough and State of Alaska lands for development thereby establishing a new tax base for the next 100 years.
4. Less than 1% of the 572,000 square miles in Alaska is owned by private individuals. Why reclaim what little is in private hands?
5. The chambers of commerce of Willow, Big Lake approve of this route as well as the Big Lake Community Council.
6. Mat-Su Borough Long Range Transportation Plan, Mat-Su Borough Comprehensive Plan, Mat-Su Borough Assembly (June 2003) recommend this route.
7. Engineering study (Shannon & Wilson, Inc. of October, 26, 2007) proves the Willow Route is the most energy efficient. It saves 16.5% more "train energy."
8. Alaska Railroad by Mr. Bruce Carr.

Alaska Railroad -- Point MacKenzie Expansion

*****Houston South Route A BAD Idea*****

The Houston South Route:

- ✦ Is located on top of a known active earthquake fault.⁹
 - ✦ Crosses a sensitive watershed negatively impacting all species of salmon and trout.¹⁰
 - ✦ Creates a manmade damn potentially flooding critical bird habitat.¹¹
 - ✦ Negatively impacts Big Lake area landowners.¹²
 - ✦ Is not supported by government, business or the people!¹³
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9. The Houston South corridor includes the possibility of a gas line and road. All would be constructed on an active seismic fault. According to the USGS, the Castle Mountain Fault is expected to fail within the next 50 years with a 7.2 magnitude earthquake.
 10. The rail bed supporting the track will bisect a 10,000-year-old watershed feeding the Little Susitna River that drains West, Moleshoe, Colt, Pear, Blanket, Horseshoe, Hourglass Lakes and the Little Susitna River.
 11. The rail bed will create an earthen dam. It is expected to flood causing bank erosion and silt build up in salmon and trout spawning beds. Additionally, flooding would cause disruption of waterfowl nests which includes loons, geese, mallards, grebes and Trumpeter Swans.
 12. Flooding could cause failure of septic systems and contamination of wells to the area's 400 homes. Also, the rail bed will disrupt the natural flow of surface and subsurface water between Colt, Moleshoe Lakes and West, Horseshoe and Hourglass Lakes.
 13. In the 2003 Tryck, Nyman Hayes study, the Houston South route was rejected because "it appeared to have the largest level of impact on wetlands and did not receive public support."

The Houston South Route is the WORST route, and should NOT be chosen.

*****Support the Willow Route*****