

EI-18184

P. O. Box 870298
Wasilla, Ak 99687
May 10, 2010

David Navecky, Environmental Protection Specialist
STB Finance Docket No. 35095
Surface Transportation Board
395 E. Street S.W.
Washington, D C 20423-001

Dear Mr. Navecky:

I offer the following comments after having reviewed the Draft Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) Alaska Railroad Corporation Construction and Operation of a Rail Line Extension to Port MacKenzie, Alaska .

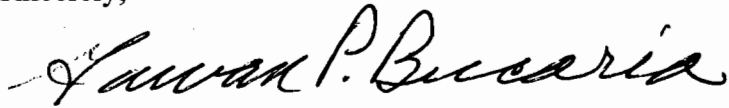
Please reconsider your rejection of an alternative proposal located between the proposed Mac West and Mac East routings within the southern portion of the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) rail line extension project. This is called Mac Central alternative within the Point MacKenzie Agricultural Project (see map1). The Mac Central route should be selected for the following reasons:

1. It minimizes most conflicts with farmers. Land owners within the agricultural project have signed easement agreements for railroad use within section lines . It prevents loss of one residence (Table S-2) and prevents numerous other conflicts with farm use.
2. It shifts the railroad away from the Mac East route that interferes with the natural drainage linking the Goose Bay State Game Refuge with the Susitna Flats State Game Refuge. A resolution passed by the Matanuska Susitna Assembly MSB Resolution Serial No. 07-002, establishes a wildlife corridor within Borough public lands (see copy and map 2 enclosed).
3. It moves the railroad west of the Point MacKenzie Road, Alsop Road, the Goose Creek Correctional Center, Holstein Heights Subdivision and other possible congestion areas should the Knik Arm Crossing be Built. It will reduce noise for Goose Bay Refuge.
4. Adopting the Mac Central ARRC right of way should reduce moose kills expected with a Mac East route. This is because the open agricultural area is less frequented by moose.
5. Retention of the forest buffer along the Point Mackenzie Road offers habitat for moose and large raptors utilizing mature forest nesting and feeding sites.
6. Shifting the Mac East route to the Mac Central location stops the direct conflict with the Point MacKenzie Community Councils (PMCC) /Matanuska Susitna Borough (MSB) plan for a town site, community commercial development in the Point MacKenzie Road Ayrshire Road, Burma Road "four corners area".
7. Linking the Mac Central Route with the Willow or Houston connections would prevent direct conflicts the Conn 2 Big Lake route has with the PMCC/MSB planned town site described in item 6.
8. Removal of the Big lake route would prevent adverse habitat changes in the Goose Creek Fen (S-16, S.6.3.3, fish resources page 5.4-22Mac East-Big Lake Alternative); a crucial component for anadromous fish rearing habitat upstream of the Goose Bay State Game

Refuge. Loss of the Goose Creek Fen through ARRC rail line construction would measurably lower the productive capacity of the Game Refuge and adjacent aquatic habitats.

Please revise your DEIS to reflect these improvements to either the Mac West or Mac East alternatives. Selection of the Mac Central ROW and a more direct route to the ARRC main line should prove to be a more economically attractive solution for a profitably operated system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Garvan P. Bucaria". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the word "Sincerely,".

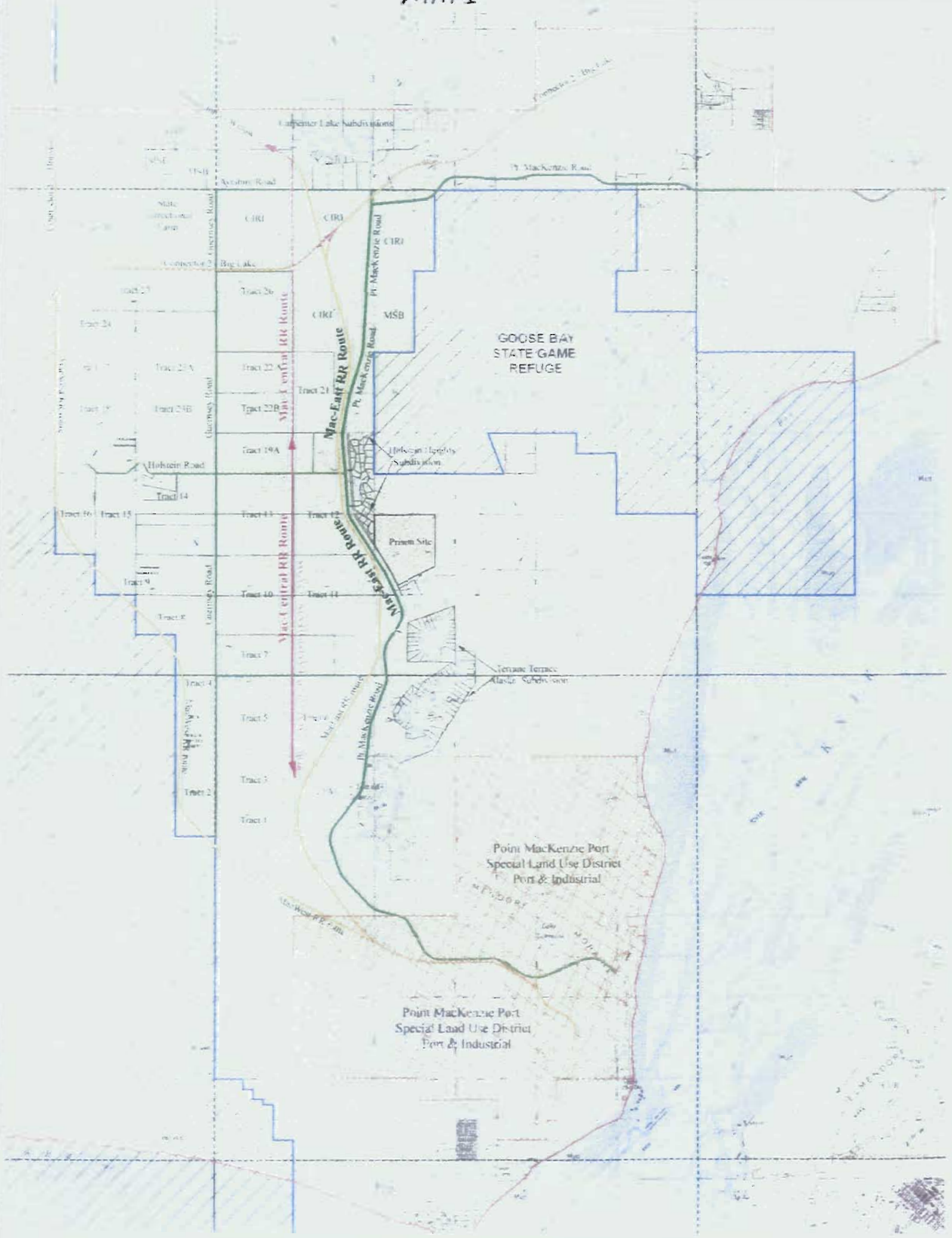
Garvan P. Bucaria

Enclosures

map 1

MSB Resolution Serial No 07-002

map 2



Passed

Adopted: *01/12/07*

**MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH
RESOLUTION SERIAL NO. 07-002**

A RESOLUTION OF THE MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH ASSEMBLY DESIGNATING
A SITE FOR THE NEW MAT-SU MEDIUM SECURITY PRISON.

WHEREAS, it is the goal of the State of Alaska to relieve overcrowding in existing Alaska prison facilities, house inmates in-state that are currently at out-of-state facilities, allow existing facilities to be used for intended purposes, reduce prisoner transportation frequency and costs, and provide good jobs for Alaskans; and

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 65 authorized the construction of a prison with a minimum of 1,200 and a maximum of 2,251 inmates in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough; and

WHEREAS, the location of a new prison in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough will provide significant positive economic impacts to the borough in the form of increased employment opportunities for borough residents and increase the economic viability of various industries and areas within the borough; and

WHEREAS, the Borough along with the State Department of Corrections, and the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation are "partners" in the site selection, financing, and construction of the prison facility; and

WHEREAS, the partners formed a Site Selection Committee that worked together on a site selection process that started with sixteen (16) sites. Through a detailed analysis including

and considered the information submitted by the Site Selection Committee on the Point MacKenzie and Sutton sites and found:

1. Sutton has a Borough adopted comprehensive plan that recommends that a new prison not be built and that any expansion of the existing facility be limited to 700 beds; and
2. There is no adopted comprehensive plan for the Point MacKenzie area; and
3. There are existing minimum-security prisons at or nearby both the Point MacKenzie and Sutton sites; and
4. There are 207 improved properties within 2-miles and 1,114 improved properties within 5-miles of the Sutton site. This compares with 44 improved properties within 2-miles and 174 improved properties within 5-miles of the Point MacKenzie site; and
5. Adding an additional prison at Sutton differs from building a new prison at Point MacKenzie. At Sutton a new prison would be added or "inserted" into an existing community. At Point MacKenzie a new prison could be built and the community could be planned for, designed or "built" around the known existence of a prison. This provides an opportunity for the Borough to plan for and design a community around the prison instead of placing a new prison within an existing community area; and

existence of the ferry changes the transportation dynamics and long-term operational costs of the Point MacKenzie site in that relatively quick and easy access to Anchorage will be possible and where it is expected, at least for the short-term, that services will be needed and many of the prison staff may live. The existence of the ferry and the possibility of the Knik Arm Bridge will make transportation and annual operating costs equal or less than the Sutton site; and

11. The close proximity of Port MacKenzie to the Point MacKenzie prison site is a positive economic factor because building materials and supplies can be transported from a port facility overland to the new prison in a shorter period of time and at less cost than to the Sutton site; and
12. The Borough has been working to increase the economic viability of Port MacKenzie and the surrounding area. The use of Port MacKenzie and the new ferry to support the construction and operations of the new prison would be a positive factor in this regard; and
13. Both the Point MacKenzie and Sutton Community Councils initially opposed the construction of the new prison in their area. However, the Point MacKenzie Community Council has reversed its decision and now supports having the prison in their community.

WHEREAS, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Planning Commission recommended in Planning Commission Resolution No. 06-56 (AM) that the Assembly approve the Point MacKenzie site for the new prison, and Sutton be selected as the alternate site if for any reason the Point MacKenzie site is not found suitable for the new prison.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly concurs with the findings of the Planning Commission.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby designates Point MacKenzie (15N04W21C001, 15N04W22C001, 15N04W27B001, 15N04W28A001) as the site for the new Mat-Su medium security prison.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly hereby designates Sutton (Township 19 North, Range 02 East, Section 36, Seward Meridian) as the alternate site, but only approved as the alternate site for the new prison if geotechnical, environmental, water quantity and quality testing, or other definitive information determines that the Point MacKenzie site is unsuitable and cannot support the construction and operation of the new prison. If the Point MacKenzie site is found unsuitable additional public hearings and amendment to the existing Sutton Comprehensive Plan will be needed before the Sutton site may be utilized for the new prison.

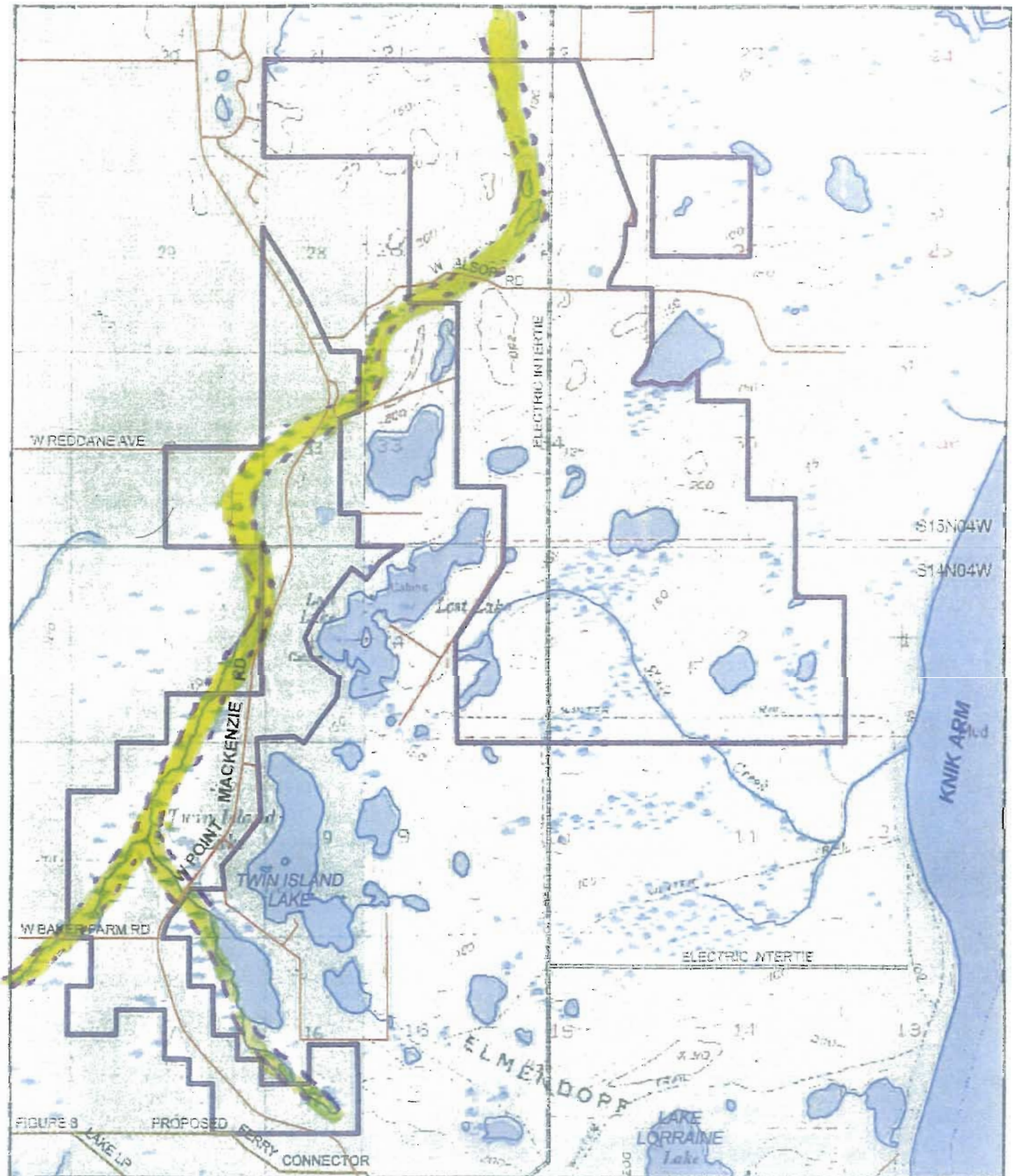
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Matanuska-

Assemblymember Bettine

1. I MOVE to amend Resolution Serial No. 07-002 (page 203 of the packet), by paragraph to make insertions and deletions as follows:

- ✓ a. to insert the phrase "by an advisory committee," after the word "addressed" and before the word "and."
- ✓ b. to strike the words "where possible."
- ✓ c. to strike the words "are, but," and to insert the phrase "to be mitigated are, but."
- ✓ d. to insert the phrase "maintain traditional recreational uses," between the words "quantity" and "the."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Matanuska-Susitna Borough Assembly agrees that concerns raised by the Point MacKenzie Community Council, local property owners, and residents need to be addressed by an advisory committee and ~~[WHERE POSSIBLE]~~ mitigated during the design, construction, and operation of the prison. The~~[SE]~~ concerns ~~[ARE, BUT]~~ to be mitigated are, but may not be limited to: protection of watershed and wildlife corridors between the Goose Bay and the Susitna Flats State Game Refuges; water quality and quantity; maintain traditional recreational uses; the need for increased fire and emergency services; the desire for members of the community to be involved in the design, exact location and daily operations of the prison; road and other infrastructure needs and upgrades.



Point MacKenzie NRMU Physical Characteristics

Community Development Unit July 1996

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20