



E1-16324
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Fairbanks Soil and Water Conservation District

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January 7, 2009

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

Dear Mr. Navecky:

Please consider the following comments to help the board decide the best route for the Alaska Railroad Corporation's Northern Rail Extension Project from North Pole, AK to Delta Junction, AK. These comments refer to the Eielson Alternative Segments only.

My family and I are stakeholders in this process as our homes and farms lie along the path of Eielson Alternative Segments 1 & 2. Naturally, we oppose this proposed route because of the negative impacts construction and operation of a railroad would have to us and our rural lifestyle. A partial list of these negative impacts include property devaluation, loss of income from farming, restricted access to recreation (fishing, hunting, trapping, skiing, snow machining, dog sledding, horse back riding, etc), creation of safety hazards, increased noise, vibration, loss of visual aesthetics, loss of wildlife habitat, loss of flyway habitat (my farm is a familiar stopping place for migrating waterfowl in the Spring and Fall), and the list could go on. In short, this route would destroy our rural lifestyle. We constructed our retirement home on our farm in 2003. We had no idea then that the ARRC would plan a rail line in our back yard.



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On a positive note, we are not opposed to the railroad and hope this project will be the continuation of a rail line into Canada and the continental United States. The ARRC's **preferred** route is *Eielson Alternative Segment 3*. We also prefer this route for the following reasons:

1. The Eielson Alternative Segment 3 would operate in an established transportation and utility corridor. This corridor includes the 4 lane Richardson Highway, Golden Valley Electric Association's high voltage transmission line, the ARR spur to Eielson Air Force Base, the old Richardson Hwy, and the always active, miles long runway at Eielson AFB.
2. Prevents the establishment of a second corridor on the south and west sides of Pile Driver Slough (Eielson Alternative Segments 1 & 2)
3. There would be less impact on private property and no impact to farming.
4. No greater environmental impact as the existing transportation and utility corridor already impacts this route.
5. Concentrates noise, vibration and safety issues in the established transportation and utility corridor.
6. Most of the south and west banks of Pile Driver Slough would remain in its natural state.
7. Stays on military land until it is connected to the Salcha Segments.
8. A quick view of the routes on the map reveals that this segment is not only the preferred route but the most logical being straighter and shorter.
9. Any recreational impacts to this segment are outlined in ARR's required mitigation.
10. All of the negatives affecting our homes and property noted above would go away.



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In conclusion, my family, neighbors and I hope that the STB will approve the ARRC's preferred route, **Eielson Alternative Segment 3**. The Alaska Farm Bureau and the Eielson Farm Community oppose any loss of agricultural land as the result of the construction of a rail line. We have been waiting since 2005 for a decision regarding the routing of the railroad. We hope that a decision can be made sooner than later. I hope you decide in our favor so that we can plan farming activities without the cloud of impending loss. Thank you for this opportunity to correspond with you. I would be happy to answer any questions about us or our farming activities.

Sincerely,

Stuart M. Davies

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