

E1 - 16318

Redd 1/26/09

Jan 11, 2009

Dear Ms. Victoria Rutson
Chief, Section of Environmental Analysis.

I thank you for sending your draft environmental impact statement for the construction and operating of the rail line from North Pole Alaska to Delta Junction, Alaska, so I could review and make comments.

For the record, I own a two and one half acre lot in the Old Valdez Estates subdivision along the Selcha River.

My preference for the route is as follows:

1. North common segment * See recommendation for alignment changes below.
2. Eielson 3 segment * See recommendation for alignment changes below.
3. Eielson 2 and 3 segment
4. Selcha 1 segment
5. Connector A segment
6. Central Alternative 1 segment
7. Donnelly 1 segment
8. South Common segment
9. Delta 1 segment.

* Recommended changes in alignment.

1. North Common segment and Eielson 3, should be incorporated into the existing rail line serving Eielson Air Force Base. This existing line then should be extended into Eielson 2 and 3 segments just before they join Selcha 1 segment prior to crossing the Tanana River.

The reasoning for this change is to move the railroad line away from watercourses as much as possible. Wildlife live mostly along running streams and sloughs and this change would reduce the impact on existing wildlife.

I strongly feel that the Airbase should cooperate in helping save as much wildlife habitat and manage the wildlife along this segment of the project. The rail line already exists and would have a very small impact on Eielson Air Force Base and security can be managed whereas the impact on wildlife can not be fully mitigated. It is arrogant no-brainer to locate the rail line along waterways when an existing rail line can be utilized that would greatly reduce the impact on wildlife.

Should the Air Force refuse to allow the use of the existing rail line, then a new route should cross the Tanana River just south of North Pole and run through the Tanana Flats Training Area. The rail line should be constructed so as to cross

flowing rivers and not run alongside flowing rivers and sloughs as much as possible.

S.6.3 Biological Resources

Wildlife, Fisheries, Bird and Predators.

Where the rail line crosses waterways that have running water or sloughs that have standing water, trusses/bridges should be constructed wide enough and tall enough so wildlife can pass under the rail line. It will be necessary to maintain the trees and vegetation as much as possible and not clear a right away on both sides of the rail line at these trusses/bridges. As these areas will constrain the wildlife at these points, hunting, trapping and other human activities must be controlled so as not to impede the wildlife movements. The rail line right-away should be fenced and game passage ways provided at least every 1/4 mile intervals. These passageways under the rail line would greatly reduce train-moose collisions mentioned in S.6.5.

S.6.13 Socioeconomics

I have been visiting Alaska over the last 15 or so years during the summer. The pristine Alaska I first visited has greatly been commercialized and Fairbanks, Salcha and Delta Junction have greatly increased its human population. Therefore, please clearly understand that when this project is started every modification to existing roads, pipelines, trucking routs, power lines storage facilities will have an enormous negative effect on air quality, water quality and will further decrease wildlife and fish habitat. The impact on the construction site is small compared with the entire human impact that follows each and every stage of the project that is developed.

Another area of impact that needs to be discussed is the impact that occurs when these developments bring an influx of people into the state to construct this project. It will impact the entire state road system, rail system, airlines and increase auto and truck traffic. These additional people cause further degrading of the environment. These new people require homes to live in, which must be built, new sewer and water systems and new power and phone lines. Because the old roads will not be adequate to handle the increased traffic, they must be rebuilt or new ones constructed. New schools, new business, more policemen, more county employees and the entire infrastructure must be enlarged to meet the new demand. The increase in service and industrial industries that is necessary brings more demands on the environment. Also, the local population will be hit with a large tax increase to fund all these amenities.

Also, you have not discussed or taken into account that this enlarged population

demands more areas for recreation, which means they operate snow machines, all terrain vehicles, motorcycles, boats, campers motor homes , pickup trucks plus most of these new workers and their families all will want to fish and hunt in Alaska. These impacts will not occur on the construction site but the gasoline and diesel they utilize will pollute the air and water and have an enormous negative effect on Alaska's big game wildlife, fish, small game and upland birds

There is a simple rule of thumb that must be taken into account, which states that for every permanent job that is created there are thirteen service and industrial jobs that must be planned for and the impact on the environment mitigated.

I could not find one paragraph in the draft environmental impact statement where these concerns were discussed or measures were outlined to mitigate the damages that will occur from the overall human impact should this project be approved and constructed.

Hopefully, you and your staff will address these concerns and amend the EIS to mitigate accordingly.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "James H. Brannan". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

James H. Brannan