



ALASKA MINERS ASSOCIATION, INC.

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E1-16321
Rec'd

January 19, 2009

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

Electronic comments: www.stb.dot.gov

RE: Draft EIS for STB Finance Docket No. 34658 – Alaska Railroad Corporation Construction and Operation of a Rail Line Between North Pole and Delta Junction, Alaska

Dear Mr. Navecky,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the DEIS for the proposed ARR extension between North Pole and Delta Junction, Alaska. The Alaska Miners Association strongly supports this project which we believe will have positive impacts upon the economic viability of existing and proposed mineral resource development projects in portions of interior Alaska.

The Alaska Miners Association is a non-profit membership organization established in 1939 to represent the mining industry. The AMA is composed of individual prospectors, geologists and engineers, vendors, small family miners, junior mining companies, and major mining companies. Our members look for and produce gold, silver, platinum, diamonds, lead, zinc, copper, coal, limestone, sand and gravel, crushed stone, armor rock, uranium, etc. Our members live and work throughout Alaska and many have substantial interests in identification and development of mineral resources in the eastern interior portions of Alaska where significant precious and base deposits have been identified.

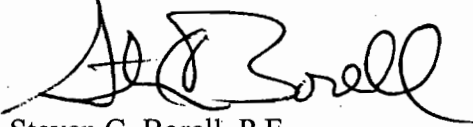
AMA strongly supports the proposed project and generally agrees with the applicants' preferred segments as identified in Table S-1 with two important exceptions. We do not support Connector B or Central Alternative 2. Unless these segments are significantly lower cost alternatives, they should be replaced with Connector A and Central Alternative 1.

Connector B and Central 2 are much closer to the Tanana River. These segments just barely skirt the various braids of the Tanana. The Tanana River is known for flooding and for being a major braided river system. From one year to the next the river can move to new areas within the floodplain and over longer time it can make major changes. By locating the railroad so close to the river it is almost certain that over time the railroad will be threatened by the movement of the river. The result will be significant cost to protect the railroad. The Richardson Highway is the prime example of the problems this river creates. Following Connector A and Central 1 would effectively eliminate this hazard.

Another benefit of following Connector A and Central 1 would be improved access for military. Rail sidings and unloading areas would be further from the river and on higher ground.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this issue. **We urge that a final EIS and record of decision be issued at the earliest possible time so this project can become part of the government economic stimulus package.**

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Borell", written over a horizontal line.

Steven C. Borell, P.E.
Executive Director

Cc: Senator Lisa Murkowski
Senator Mark Begich
Congressman Don Young
Governor Sarah Palin