

May 6, 2010

STB Finance Docket No. 35095

Surface Transportation Board;

I wish to enter my final public comment at this time on the rail line extension for Point MacKenzie, Alaska.

Thank you for sending me a copy of the Draft Environmental statement. As lengthy as it is, it was most notable for what it was lacking.

1. Funding
2. There is only one route alternative.

I learned from the Newspaper that on the North end of the project, the routes from Willow and Big Lake are "No Goes". So on the North end that leaves Houston and Houston.

On the South end the Con 2 route is out to the Big Lake hook up. According to the Railroad Man who showed up for a Community Council Meeting, Con 1 is out because it connects to Mac West. And Mac West is out because as it stands, it uses State Refuge Land and Alaska DNR has stated they will sue them into forever before they let them build a railroad on the Refuge.

----- At this point in the Council meeting I started taking notes.

Public Comment: So the only route you have available is the Mac West route and Con 3 route?

RR Man: We now favor the Mac West route, yes.

Public Comment: So you favor the route which goes down the most small holdings of private real estate on Point MacKenzie. How do you plan to handle access to those private properties?

RR Man: They will handled with negotiations with each property owner.

General Comment: Do you expect problems with these negotiations?

RR Man: We already have 11 attorneys working on this project.

General Comment: And this is the only route alternative?

RR Man: We have just lately identified an existing RR right of way that runs down the middle of the farm project. We may include it in our final comments to the Surface Transportation Board.

Public Comment: There have been two other RR route studies since 2002. Why wasn't any of the information gathered in those studies incorporated in this study?

RR Man: This is a brand new study.

Public Comment: So the millions of dollars spent on these studies and all the information was just dumped?

RR Man after a long pause: We used those studies as a basis for our own study.

Public Comment: I attended all the meetings for both of those studies. That RR right of way was clearly identified in both of those studies.

RR Man had no comment.

This whole thing has been poorly conceived, poorly handled and poorly done. Tearing up wet land and destroying cultural values as well as displacing property owners for such a poorly handled project proposal ---- it should not happen.

I'm not anti growth or anti development, but this is a goat rope.

I realize the STB feels no pressure to hurry up and reach a conclusion. There are no contracts waiting and nothing is going to happen. But I urge you to consider the property owners affected by the only remaining route. For over two years now there has been no building, no construction, no land improvements, no property transactions --- we're all waiting to see what happens with this damn railroad.

I wish to thank the STB for this opportunity to comment and thank them for keeping me in the loop. Myself and other property owners directly affected by this project have yet to receive any notification or communication from the Alaska State RR or the Mat Su Borough. None what so ever. But I don't feel too left out. In a phone conversation with the Borough Land Manager last week, she hadn't received anything about it either. A goat rope.

Sincerely,
Gary D. Thompson
Point MacKenzie, AK