



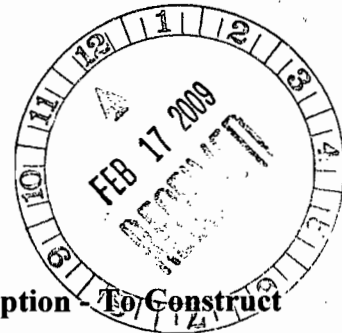
EI-16415

William C. & Joyce A. Whipple
P. O. Box 56199, North Pole, AK 99705

Phone: (907) 488-6201 - Cell (907) 347-0959



February 2, 2009



**TO: Surface Transportation Board
395 E Street, SW
Washington, DC 20423-0001**

RE: STB Finance Docket No. 35468, Alaska Railroad Corporation - Petition for Exemption - To Construct and Operate a Rail Line Between North Pole, Alaska, and Delta Junction, Alaska; Issuance of Draft Environmental Impact Statement

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this on behalf of myself, Joyce A. Whipple, and my husband, William C. Whipple. Our residential address is: 4301 Eielson Farm Road, North Pole, AK 99705; however, our mailing address is: P. O. Box 56199, North Pole, AK 99705.

We appreciate you sending us copies of the Environmental Impact Statement for referenced project, and can see that a lot of thought and research went into preparing it. It appears that you did a thorough job, and are trying to restrict the impact on the environment with the least amount of negativity. We do thank you for all of the work that is going into this project. However, whenever you go into a populated neighborhood with a project of this magnitude, there are going to be adverse results for many of the people living in the area.

Since we live in the Eielson Farm Road area, that is the area we are most familiar with and concerned about. We are lucky as one of the routes originally suggested would have been approximately 100 feet or less from our home, and we weren't sure exactly what would happen if it had been selected. We attended a meeting about 2 years ago about it, and the people in charge of the meeting weren't aware that most of the land in the Eielson Farm Road area is designated as "agricultural land" and has restrictions on the title. The land with these restrictions, according to State law, can only be subdivided one time, cannot be split up into more than 4 pieces, and all of the pieces must be at least 40 acres or more. The person holding the meeting several years ago was not aware of this restriction. We also attended another meeting last month and the people holding that meeting didn't seem to know about the restrictions on the land in the Eielson Farm Road area. I suppose you could get some sort of special State legislation where you could take however much land you need for this railroad project, but no-one we've ever talked to seems to know how that would work. Since the route that would really have impacted us has been dropped, we didn't submit any written concerns.

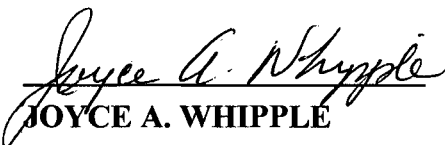
I have recently learned that this project could have an adverse impact on one of my neighbors, Robyn Davies. She and her husband, Stuart Davies, subdivided their agricultural land a few years ago, and her daughter's home, which was only built about a year ago, was built on one of the subdivided parcels, and it is apparently right in the way of one of the routes that is under serious consideration.

We strongly urge that you select a route with the least impact on the people living in the areas where the railroad will go, including the Eielson Farm Road area, as well as all of the other areas. There are vast pieces of land owned by the State of Alaska, and the Federal Government. Since the main reason for the railroad extension appears to benefit the military, why not put the route on military land where it's possible. If that isn't possible, at least take every option possible to avoid peoples' homes.

Thank you for allowing us to submit our concerns.

Sincerely,


WILLIAM C. WHIPPLE


JOYCE A. WHIPPLE