

Rec'd 12/6/05



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Growing Alaska Through Responsible Resource Development

E1-1863

Founded 1975

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December 2, 2005

Mr. David Navecky
Surface Transportation Board
Case Control Unit
Environmental Filing
1925 K Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20423-0001

Re: Alaska Railroad Corporation Northern Rail Extension Project

Dear Mr. Navecky:

The Resource Development Council (RDC) is writing to express support for the extension of the Alaska Railroad Corporation's mainline track near Eielson Air Force Base to Fort Greely, 80 miles to the southeast. The extension would provide support for movement of military equipment and supplies and enhance economic expansion in an area with little transportation infrastructure.

RDC is a statewide organization made up of all resource sectors, business associations, labor unions, Native corporations, tourism providers, local governments and thousands of individuals. RDC's purpose is to encourage a strong, diversified private sector in Alaska and expand the state's economic base through the responsible development of our oil, gas, minerals, forest products and fishery resources.

The purpose of the extension is to provide freight and passenger rail services that will provide year-round ground access to some of the largest military training areas in the world, enhancing the readiness of military units stationed in Alaska and throughout the Pacific. It would also enable freight movement and facilitate passenger service between Fairbanks and Fort Greely in support of growing U.S. Army requirements. An extension of the track to Fort Greely would provide a rail link to and between all major military installations in Alaska.

Moreover, the extension would provide transportation infrastructure that would support existing and new mineral and agricultural development in the area. Common carrier rail service would provide for bulk transport

of goods developed from these and other industries, including timber. Track extension would enhance opportunities for economic expansion in a relatively isolated area of the state with very little transportation infrastructure.

Although a highway links Fairbanks with Fort Greely, this route can be hazardous, particularly during the long, dark and icy winter months. Train service would facilitate better choices and meet the transit needs of military personnel and their families, as well as those working in other sectors.

In concluding, RDC strongly support the Northern Rail Extension Project. This project is clearly in the best interest of Alaska, its economy and local residents. We appreciate the opportunity to present comments and look forward to providing additional input in the future.

Sincerely,

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL
for Alaska, Inc.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Carl Portman', written in a cursive style.

Carl Portman
Deputy Director