

EI-7070

Port McKenzie Rail Extension EIS

Public Meeting

Big Lake Elementary School

March 4, 2008

Frances Vadla – This is Frances Vadla and I would like to comment especially for Steve Victors who is a neighbor who is at present Outside. I contacted him asking if there was any comment he had about the Big Lake route which goes very close to our area near Leaton Lake and on north from there. His comment was that since he is a bee keeper, he is very concerned about the herbicides that would be used along the railroad and because the bees are not just in his area but in surrounding area, he felt it could be hazardous to his business so we would appreciate your consideration for this part of his livelihood. Thank you.

Dana Olson – My name is Dana Olson, HC35 Box 5438, Wasilla, Alaska. I live in Knik and I'm here to finish some of my testimony that I did in Knik. I did it two separate times in Knik and I'm here to address the Surface Transportation Board finance docket 35095 and I want to begin by saying that a little background that Big Lake is received federal money in relation to the Big Lake forest fire and, as such, I'm here to demand the Big Lake Community Council and the Chamber of Commerce, I'm here to demand a new trailer because Big Lake was perceived by the Borough as having zoning power and it went to the formal process and although they didn't get that, the Borough perceived that they did and they acted as they did. One of the things that I did was I came over and sat on the citizen group concerning the – they one time called themselves Firegade or whatnot, they sought and put in the newspaper come to this group and talk about the Miller's Reach fire whatnot and why I'm here today is I talked a little bit about the Miller's Reach fire and liability and whatnot is that this is an unfair trade practice under insurance law because these people convinced people to get into a class action, of which I opted out, but you have the issue of the fires that were started intentionally combined with the other fires and the fact that this Big Lake Community Council and this Chamber of Commerce had no

liability insurance and that they were asserting that they had the zoning capacity and whatnot, I believe that makes them liable to pay for a new trailer for me.

The Big Lake Community Council has supported a recreational scheme affecting tourism in the area and this is the financial federal funds that they got. They got these for trying to bring back supposed tourism that left but that's the component of why State never had an EIS is because instead of revising the Susitna Area Plan and the Willow Sub-Basin Plan as the Legislature encodified Senate Bill 196, 1987 which was in a coastal thing, this group of people didn't want to go through governmental coordination. They wanted to have more authority than is allowed in a second class borough. I apologize to the firefighters who lost their homes fighting the fire but simply put, this fire went from their community into my community and then the Borough sat and didn't defend my place. Plus, the local radio station put on the airwaves that I should put my sprinkler on my roof and having a new baby and a disabled husband, I had no choice. I followed their procedure.

During the FEMA thing I applied for letting out my propane and I never got any money for that or whatnot because they were telling people to let out their propane out of your tank. They were giving all kinds of erroneous information out over the airwaves and yet they got commendations for doing a great job. The Chamber has supported the National Parks Service in combining a trail system which, the Borough like I said yesterday, wanted to use them for taxation purposes, corridors. With their snowmachining and their tourism around the lake they could have asked the Borough to ask the State to do a joint Land Use Plan Revision or to make amendments but instead, they chose to exercise authority which they didn't have any authority to do. The National Parks Service came up to the Trapper Creek Community Council, of which my family was outside of and the Borough went in and actually wrote in the recreational trail plan

that I had a recreational trail on Flanky Trail to my property which I had to ask DNR to write a letter and I had to post it because I was getting damage.

At that time, I asserted that I might file a fair housing complaint on the Trapper Creek Community Council because the National Parks Service was showing that they were potentially going to use my RS247 assertive and then come in and go in and potentially create another one on my family's property where that we were trying to relocate. The State has no fire retardant EIS standard. In fact, the former Governor Tony Knowles is the one who wrote a fire policy in addition to the foreseeability standard that was already incorporated in the Willow Sub-Basin Plan and the Susitna Area Plan. I accused these people of intentionally trying to create fraud and misrepresentation so that if they lost in their lawsuit, that they would go in and not be held liable but they should be held liable. They went in and intentionally tried to get a class action going of people who had their homes burned out and like I said, I sat and listened to these things plus I sat at the Big Lake trial every day except jury selection. The Miller's Reach lawsuit is what I'm referring to. And they went in and they convinced the people who should have been able to collect economic damages, they convinced them that they should combine with the others and this is an unfair trade practice under insurance law.

I mentioned a little bit about being persecuted and I'd like to go into that a little bit further. Troopers came into my house without a search warrant. My trailer was damaged and had officials come in and declare that my trailer wasn't livable and then they persecuted me through child support crap and told me that I had to live in a damaged house trailer with a soaked ceiling and floors that wouldn't hold any heat. They told me I had to live in there and they made me frostbitten. They persecuted me over this issue. Since this is a financial document. It says that it's Docket number 35095, I'm going to ask that the Big Lake Community Council and the

Chamber of Commerce respond to me in 10 days about replacing my trailer and relocating a new one there or else I'm going to ask that the Surface Transportation Board to deny the Certificate of Need because they don't have any insurance. They're acting as if they are cities, but they are only divisions of the Borough, which is a division of the State. They're not home ruled. They don't have insurance and the Borough has never officially said that these groups had accepted liability and since the State did not defend me and the Borough did not defend me and they wouldn't even revise the Land Use Plans and they sought to take my property and I am here today to ask that the Big Lake Community Council and the Chamber of Commerce of Big Lake be contacted and that they respond within 10 days or else I am going to contradict that a Certificate of Need is a lawful process and to summarize this up, I think that when you put your business interests and the Borough goes in and cites them as being a trade and puts a whole coastal management program now as a trade, that I am entitled to these damages and there is no time limit for federal conspiracy and I'd like to reiterate that the court reporter did see my green card where I served the U.S. Secretary of Transportation alleging a fair housing conspiracy.

Thank you.

Lyndee Knapp – Good evening, my name is Lyndee Knapp. I live on Marion Lake, Alaska near Big Lake and I've lived in this area since 1977. My concerns are coming through the backyard of Big Lake. I don't know what alternative it is but the one that comes closest to Big Lake on the east side and I think that it will impact a lot of people with noise and congestion for being able to travel through this area. Sound travels so easily over water, so any time – even though you can say well it's a railroad and doesn't make that much noise, well, it will because of the sound traveling over water easily. I don't understand the purpose of the railroad yet. I don't understand the need so that's one of the things that as a public member I'm having trouble with.

I can understand this is the Environmental Impact Statement so we're talking about the environment so I don't know about those kinds of issues but I guess the environment being sound and ambience of the land is important as well. So, I would say in summary that I object to the one most strenuously on the east side of Big Lake. The next one a little bit and I can understand why you'd run by Red Shirt Lake and I can understand why those people are having apoplexy or whatever it is over that issue. What else do I want to say? Oh, and then because this is an Environmental Impact Statement, I would encourage outreach programs with the people that use the trail systems in that area and maybe to develop better organized trail systems that can be designated to go over or under the railroad so people can still travel to the west. Thank you very much.

Lee Ganshow - My address is Box 520968, Big Lake. I guess what I'm trying to say is where this proposed route goes between the Papoose Twins and Crooked Lake, many swamps and a lot of people. Is this kind of what you're looking for? It's a growing area but on the other hand, it is very much recreational. People go there to get away from the big city so to speak and this route I guess is called the Willow route and it goes out and around over here. It's farther but it also follows the ridgeline, which is naturally already good gravel and stuff. Problem with that I understand is where it cuts back into the Parks Highway above Willow it also gets into recreational areas so it seems to me which recreational area do you want to impact. Hopefully they'll think of I guess you'd call it the environment, the swamps and all that stuff on the Houston route there and especially since there is not much room between both Papoose Lake and Crooked Lake, it looks like quite a bit on the map but it's not really very far and so you'd be impacting both the Papoose Twins area and the Cooked Lake area as far as people.

I think those are my two biggest concerns but the other thing I have a question on is – it was before the 2003 study there was a route on the opposite side of Crooked Lake from the proposed Houston route. I would like to know why that got dropped off the map other than the fact that there is so much clamor against it and stuff. But I'd like to know who initiated that and how that came to be because in reality, all that did was change it from between Crooked Lake and Flat Lake to the other side of Crooked Lake between Crooked Lake and the Papoose Twins. It seemed like a wash between the two. Seems to me the Willow route is much farther away from people except like I say, when you get back up towards where it cuts into the Parks Highway. A lot of people up there have concerns too so if there's some way to split the difference and get on the outside route and come back into the Parks Highway. I guess I won't get into asking about the politics and stuff. You're probably not here for that stuff. Who benefits, you know, and who's actually behind all this and who planned it out and who's going to make the money off of it, especially in light – I'll have to say in light of finally all the corruptions stuff coming to light up here. I mean, it's out of hand and you know they've been working all together and I think all that should be looked at myself. Seeing as how this is the first time I've ever done this, I think this is about all I know to talk about.

Dr. Kevin Burg – Hello, my name is Dr. Kevin Burg. I live at 2780 South Horseshoe Lake Road, which is on West Lake and the concerns that I have – looking at my notes here. I have first of all an area that's a story from the Anchorage Daily Times, August 11, 1971. The first item I'm concerned about is the fact that there was a railroad accident blamed on water soft roadbed derailment, five engines and 11 cars near Houston. If you look at the map of the south Houston route, there's a nine to 11 mile stretch where the train actually crosses two fault lines and parallels the other from the Castle Mountain Fault. This train wreck occurred in that area

and that train, if you were coming from the north or from the south would have to make a turn in that area, which is slow down soft soils in that area. So there's water, two fault lines and, you know, I'm really concerned about the safety in that area.

The next concern that I have is along the lines of is that the railroad is described as a huge earthen damn and I realize there can be ways to divert water but Mother Nature has some of her own ways which tend to be more powerful than man. St. Louis wasn't supposed to flood but it did a number of years ago and the area for the south Houston line is to the north of a lot of lakes that do have people living on them. Big Lake, the lake, is the most popular lake in the State as far as my knowledge is concerned and I am concerned how, you know, the water that would be changed. Would the amount of water going to the Big Lake area be decreased or would the railroad as it proceeds south actually back up the water under – you know, I'm not sure how it would affect it. During the dry years would we have less water in the lake? During the wet years would we have more? I'm not sure. I haven't seen anything that I've read that really addresses that point. But that area has earthquakes, water issues. Big Lake as far as the number of people on it, one of our former governors, Wally Hickel, has a place on Big Lake. There are condos that are very expensive out in that area and if the quality of that lake is affected, I can see that being a huge we want to sue somebody type of area because if the engineers would make a mistake and affect that lake, I just think there could be a lot of problems with it and earlier studies have suggested the Willow route, which is farther to the west, which is away from the population area and I don't think it would effect the water conditions as much. That's higher land and, you know, why run a railroad closer to the population and closer to the currently really actively used lakes.

Big Lake is also one of the two spots in the State – the Kenai River being the first and Big Lake being the second, that currently are already having over-recreational use and they're talking about restricting two cycle engines on those lakes because of too much oil and if that ecosystem I guess you'd call it is already in trouble, what would railroad through there do and the thing is, there's alternatives and it's again to go farther west with the Willow route. I've mentioned the safety of the railroad where it pulls off of the Houston area. The Willow route has been described as a more expensive route to build but if anything goes wrong with that fault line, suits due to affecting Big Lake, it would seem to me that the better foresight would be to head farther west and the previous study showed that too that the west route – you know, if we're going to do this project and it sounds like it may go through, do it well. The group of people that we're talking about here – we're not going to be around forever but railroads last a long time and Mother Nature lasts even longer. I would hope that the Surface Transportation Board has the ability to use its insight and look farther into the future. The area of the Willow route also has the advantage that there's enough room out there than an entire new city could be built and as our population continues to expand, this is a wonderful opportunity to put a railroad through, not a virgin territory, but kind of like the old west where a railroad was put up and population centers could be built around it. Anchorage is already hampered by the fact that it's got mountains on one side and water on the other and it's pretty much used up all the available land and our area can be the future of Alaska for commerce and industry and so much more can be done if we run this route through an area that can be used more. The aspect of throwing more money at it saving a few dollars just isn't the issue. Let's do it right and do it well and that's what I hope your group is able to do. I'd like to thank you for your time and maybe throw in an interesting quote. It's from an unknown author but "We just sort of went along, but what if it's not the best

way. What if there's a better way? What if there's something more?" I think the Willow route is the something more. I think it's the best way and I hope it's the route that you're able to recommend and hopefully the environmental studies show that that would be a great place to put it too. Thank you for your time.