

E0-1052



**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD**  
Washington, DC 20423

*Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration*

October 22, 2007

Kathryn Kusske Floyd, Esq.  
Mayer Brown LLP  
1909 K Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20006

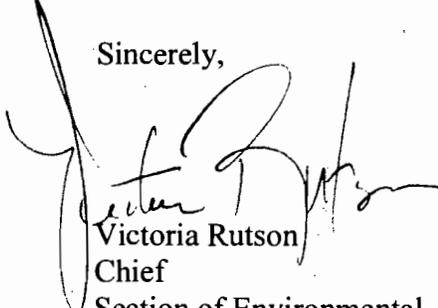
Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34658, The Alaska Railroad Corporation -- Petition for Exemption to Construct and Operate a Rail Line Between North Pole, Alaska and Delta Junction, Alaska

Dear Ms. Floyd:

Pursuant to 40 C.F.R. § 1506.5(a), we would like to request additional information and data needed for the purposes of the Section of Environmental Analysis' environmental review in connection with the above-referenced proceeding. I have enclosed a list of information and data that we need as part of our preparation of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement, specifically relating to rail line noise and vibration, geotechnical studies, GIS and mapping data, and rail construction and operations information.

Thank you for your continued assistance. Please provide a copy of your response to Dave Navecky of my staff and to our independent third-party consultant, Alan Summerville, at ICF International, 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, VA 22031-1207.

Sincerely,



Victoria Rutson  
Chief  
Section of Environmental Analysis

## Resource Specific and Technical Information

### (1) Noise and Vibration

- a. Provide the most current version of the *Noise and Vibration Technical Report for the Eielson Branch Realignment Project* and supplemental analyses.
- b. Provide the average length of rail cars on each type of train described in the April 2007, *Technical Memorandum Supplemental Noise and Vibration Analysis for the Fort Wainwright Realignment Project*.
- c. Confirm (or correct) the following summary of daily train passbys on the Eielson Branch for the current train traffic documented in the 2007 *Technical Memorandum*

Milepost	Airport train	Coal train	Petroleum train	Total
0 - 6	2	1	4	7
6 - 17		1	4	5
17 - 20		1		1

- d. Confirm that the number of trains and train lengths used in the analysis described in the *Noise and Vibration Technical Report for the Eielson Branch Realignment Project*: (1) are the same as those in the *Technical Memorandum, Supplemental Noise and Vibration Analysis for the Fort Wainwright Realignment Project* and (2) provide a comprehensive picture of current rail traffic on the Eielson Branch.
- e. Provide the estimated length of passenger trains that would run between Delta Junction and Fairbanks.
- f. Is it ARRC policy to sound the train horn for both private and public at-grade highway-rail crossings? For at-grade pedestrian or recreational trail crossings?

### (2) Safety

- a. What types of safety warning and/or protection does ARRC intend to use for at-grade crossings of the proposed rail line with recreational trails and private crossings?

### (3) Hydrology and Geotechnical Information

- a. Provide geotechnical data and reports from investigations in 2007 for the Northern Rail Extension Project.
- b. Provide a copy of the final UAF study of a Tanana River crossing, if available.
- c. Provide the results of ice dam investigations when they become available.
- d. Provide hydrologic and hydraulic analyses and reports prepared to support the preliminary design details for bridge and culvert crossings as presented in the stream crossing table, stream crossing map book, and preliminary design drawings, including the following, if available:
  1. Report describing and/or supporting the approach and rationale for stream crossings, including: conceptual and/or preliminary designs for culverts, culvert batteries, small and large bridges.

2. Report summarizing hydraulic, hydrologic, and/or scour analyses (or models) and other factors (e.g., seasonal flow character, ice jams, lateral shifting) in support of conceptual and preliminary bridge designs at major stream crossings (Tanana, Delta River, Delta Creek, Little Delta, Salcha).
3. Report describing the rationale for determining conveyance types and sizes, including any peak flow analyses, and other characteristics (e.g., ice effects, sediment transport issues) for specific stream crossings as indicated in the stream crossing data file.
4. Additional supporting documentation, if available, regarding field survey measurements, and data analyses that were used in the selection of the alternative alignments.

(4) GIS and Mapping Information

- a. Provide available aerial photography coverage of the area from North Pole to Fairbanks if ARRC coverage is of higher resolution than FNSB coverage.
- b. Provide an updated data catalogue of GIS information and updated versions of any GIS data layers that have been added or modified since the July 6, 2006 GIS data submission. Please provide this information in electronic form to both SEA and its independent third-party contractor. Please include the following in this submission:
  1. GIS shape files for bridge and culvert locations submitted in June 2007;
  2. GIS shape files delineating stream drainage area boundaries, if available;
  3. GIS files, maps, and reports for wetland delineations, functions, and value assessments, when available.
- c. Confirm the location of the DTA boundary shown on the Rev. 5 maps. [A DTA representative has indicated that the boundary shown on Map 17 of the Rev. 5 map set is not in the correct location and that it should run through Clear Lake rather than to the northeast of the lake].

(5) Other Technical Reports

- a. Provide available technical reports (in addition to the report reference in 1(a) above) prepared in support of the Eielson Branch and Fort Wainwright Realignment Environmental Assessments.

Construction Information

(1) Bridges and Culverts

- a. Provide the estimated length and elevation of Delta Creek, Delta River, Little Delta River and Salcha River railroad and vehicle (where applicable) bridges. [Section (2)(c) of the May 24, 2007 response to SEA's October 12, 2006 information request indicates that hydraulic modeling and statistical analyses have been used to estimate the length of the bridges, but the response does not include estimated lengths for these bridges].
- b. Provide information on how ARRC plans to cross the Trans-Alaska Oil Pipeline sufficient to describe these crossings (one per alignment but in different locations) as part of the proposed action and alternatives.

(2) Roads

- a. Describe road improvements, if any are planned for construction or operation, from the Richardson Hwy to the Tanana River bridge at the Salcha crossing location for the route shown in Section (2)(c) of the attachment to the May 24, 2007 response to SEA's October 12, 2006 information request.
- b. Indicate (e.g., on a map) the anticipated location of the Richardson Hwy following relocation in the vicinity of the Salcha school.
- c. Provide a drawing of the proposed access route from the Richardson Hwy to the Tanana River bridge at the Flag Hill crossing location and describe any anticipated road improvements.
- d. Provide a description and/or schematic drawing(s) of typical at-grade and grade-separated crossings of recreational trails and the rail line.

(3) Facilities

- a. Provide current descriptions and maps and/or GIS or autoCAD data showing the locations of anticipated ancillary facilities, such as construction staging areas (if outside the ROW), overburden (organic material) disposal areas, communication towers (including anticipated height and access roads, if any), and planned passenger station.
- b. Identify the activities that ARRC plans to conduct at the Flag Hill material processing site.

(4) Personnel and Materials

- a. Provide an estimate of peak annual employment for construction.
- b. Provide an estimated quantity of ballast to supplement the information on construction materials and quantities provided in Section (5)(b) of the attachment to the May 24, 2007 response to the October 12, 2006 information request.

Operational Information

(1) Train Operation

- a. Provide a track chart showing the speed of trains and grade crossing locations on the Eielson Branch.
- b. Provide estimated typical operating speeds at each highway-rail at-grade crossing for freight service.
- c. Provide estimated typical operating speeds at each highway-rail at-grade crossing for passenger service.
- d. Provide the typical number and length of locomotives per passenger train and freight train using the Northern Rail Extension to supplement the information provided in Operational Information Section (1)(c) of the attachment to the May 24, 2007 response to the October 12, 2006 information request.