



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

August 18, 2006

Judith Bittner
State Historic Preservation Officer
Alaska Office of History and Archaeology
550 West 7th Ave., Suite 1310
Anchorage, AK 99501-3565

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

Dear Ms. Bittner:

This letter serves to formally delineate the minor deviations from the originally submitted and agreed-upon survey strategy (Potter 2005), and to formalize the verbal agreements reached in the July 28, 2006 meeting and teleconference attended by representatives of your office, the Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA), and SEA's third-party contractor team, including ICF International and Northern Land Use Research, Inc. (NLUR).

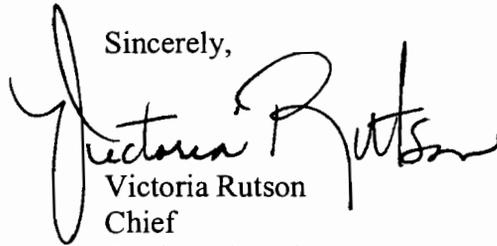
NLUR is now working from the "Revision 4" version of alignment alternatives and associated ancillary facilities information provided by the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) in July 2006, which supersedes the previously reported Revision 3a alignment alternates series. With the addition of about 54 miles of alignment (by Revision 4 as compared to Revision 3a), NLUR has altered the survey strategy somewhat. Here are the specific changes in the survey strategy:

- All ancillary facilities are being analyzed with respect to the predictive model (Potter 2005), rather than being ground surveyed 100 percent. Most of these ancillary facilities are in areas with relatively low site potential, and are being surveyed through Type A surveys (helicopter-based surveys with localized areas of testing). Others are in higher potential locations and are being surveyed through Type B surveys (ground-based transects and localized areas of testing).
- A full Phase 2 (Evaluation Phase) level-of-effort was described in the survey strategy/predictive model document (Potter 2005). NLUR is testing discovered sites to obtain necessary information to complete a Determination of Eligibility (DOE) to the National Register of Historic Places. However, given the number of sites and the

fact that most of them were discovered in subsurface contexts, NLUR is analyzing the sites in a less intensive manner, as agreed in principle during the July 28, 2005 meeting. Enough information is being gathered to assess context, integrity, stratigraphic position, age (if possible), diagnostics, and overall technology. Site extent (identifying the borders of located sites) is not being addressed in our field effort, given the limited helicopter availability, limited field season, and depth/complexity of the buried sites.

All other aspects of the survey are following the Predictive Model and Survey Plan document (Potter 2005). If you have any questions or comments please do not hesitate to contact Dave Navecky, SEA Project Manager, at 202-565-1593 or Alan Summerville, ICF Consulting Project Manager, at 703-934-3616.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Victoria Rutson
Chief

Section of Environmental Analysis

REFERENCES CITED:

Potter, Ben A. 2005. *Site Location Model and Survey Strategy for Cultural Resources in the Alaska Railroad Northern Rail Extension Project Area*. Prepared for ICF Consulting Services, LLC, by Northern Land Use Research, Inc., Fairbanks.