

EO-241



SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

May 4, 2005

Ms. Kathryn Kusske Floyd
Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw LLP
1909 K Street, NW
Washington, DC 20006-1101

Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34658, The Alaska Railroad Corporation – Petition for Exemption to Construct and Operate a Rail Line Between Eielson Air Force Base (North Pole) and Fort Greely (Delta Junction), Alaska

Dear Ms. Floyd:

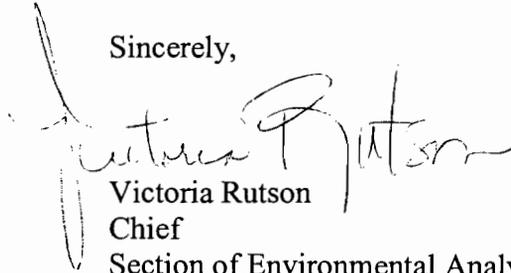
Pursuant to 49 CFR 1105.10(c), we are granting your request of April 20, 2005 for a waiver of the six-month prefilng notice generally required for construction projects under 49 CFR 1105.10(a)(1).

The Surface Transportation Board's (Board) Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) met with Rob Jenkins of your firm and several Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) representatives on January 11, 2005. The ARRC representatives were: Tom Brooks, Chief Engineer; Brett Flint, Manager, Project Management; Barbara Hotchkin, Permits and NEPA Specialist; and Eileen Reilly, Vice President, Projects, Engineering, Technology and Signal. At the meeting, the ARRC representatives and Mr. Jenkins explained that ARRC would seek authority from the Board to construct and operate approximately 80 miles of new rail line that would connect Eielson Air Force Base near North Pole, Alaska to a point at, or near, Fort Greely and the Donnelly Training Area near Delta Junction, Alaska. The proposed rail line would include a 15-mile spur from Flag Hill to the Blair Lakes Military Training Area. The project would support military and civilian activities along the proposed rail line corridor. The ARRC representatives also discussed environmental information that had already been gathered for the proposed project. At the January 11, 2005 meeting, SEA also provided a general overview of the Board's environmental review process, SEA's role in the process, and the use of third-party consultants.

May 4, 2005
Page 2

Based on the information from this initial meeting, SEA believes that it has adequate information and the applicant is sufficiently aware of the environmental process to grant this request. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at 202-565-1545 or David Navecky of my staff at 202-565-1593.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the left of the typed name and title.

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis