EO - 405

SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD
Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis and Administration

October 12, 2006

Kathryn Kusske Floyd, Esq.
Mayer, Brown, Rowe & Maw 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 needed for the purposes of the Section of Environmental Analysis' environmental review in connection with the above-referenced proceeding. The list of information is attached and relates to rail construction and operations.

Thank you for your assistance. In addition to Dave Navecky of my staff, please provide a copy of your response to Mr. Alan Summerville of ICF International, our independent third-party contractor at 9300 Lee Highway, Fairfax, Virginia, 22031. Please feel free to contact me or Dave Navecky at 202-565-1593 if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis

Enclosure

Construction Information

(1) Alignments
   a. Provide new conceptual designs for typical right-of-way cross sections or confirm the conceptual designs presented in the appendix of the June 2005 Project Overview and Background document.

(2) Bridges and Culverts
   a. Identify the locations of stream crossings and sizes and types of bridges and culverts for the crossings along each rail alignment.
   b. Provide construction materials and methods for the bridges and culverts.
   c. Provide a conceptual design for bridges and culverts, particularly of the larger river crossings (e.g., Tanana River, Delta Creek).

(3) Road Crossings
   a. Identify the locations of at-grade road crossings, the owner of the roads (public or private [no need to provide private owner's name]), and the proposed warning devices.
   b. Identify planned clearances for proposed grade-separated crossings.

(4) Track Engineering Design
   a. Confirm or update the track engineering design information presented in the *Summary of Planned Freight and Passenger Operation* dated October 14, 2005.

(5) Construction
   a. Provide a timeline for construction of the rail line and a description of how the rail line and associated facilities (both for construction and operation) would be constructed. Please indicate whether the rail line would be built in simultaneous segments or sequentially starting from North Pole. Include in the construction timeline associated with ancillary facilities and use of material site locations. Also indicate the seasons in which the various construction activities would occur.

b. Provide an estimate of the daily average construction activity (e.g., 12 hours per day for 3 bulldozers) or a range of activity for use in estimating the annual tons of emissions. The estimate of activity should account for the difference among seasons.

(6) Material requirements

a. List types and quantities of materials (e.g., dirt, gravel, cement, etc.) brought into or removed during the construction phase (e.g., average of two tons of soil would be removed per day). Identify the main transportation method for obtaining materials (e.g., dump trucks, rail).
b. Confirm or update information regarding material requirements provided in the Status Report (Land Disturbing Activities Associated with ARRC Northern Rail Extension between Eielson and Delta Junction), dated March 28, 2006.

(7) Access Roads

a. Identify and provide conceptual design(s) for all construction and permanent access roads to the rail line, borrow pits, quarries, construction camps, etc.

(8) Structures

a. Confirm or update the information provided in the Status Report dated March 28, 2006, and the Draft Facility Footprint Map, Rev 4, dated July 2006.
b. Confirm or update the general location and provide conceptual designs for all microwave towers described in the Status Report March 28, 2006.

Operational Information

(1) Confirm/update operation material presented in the *Summary of Planned Freight and Passenger Operation* dated October 14, 2005, including:

a. The number of military, commercial freight and passenger trains per year.
b. The number and length of typical cars in each type of train.
c. The number and type (make/model) of locomotives (or other power units) in each type of train?

(2) What are the estimated typical operating speeds at each highway-rail at-grade crossing for freight service?

(3) What are the estimated typical operating speeds at each highway-rail at-grade crossing for passenger service?

(4) What is the estimated travel time for passenger service? For freight service?

(5) For hazardous materials safety analysis, please provide a list of materials proposed to be transported.

(6) What is the estimated number of additional employees that would be required for operation and maintenance of the proposed rail line extension and supporting facilities?

(7) Describe anticipated maintenance activities and methods for the right-of-way (e.g., vegetation control).