

**From:** Jodi Taylor  
**To:** [Senate Finance Committee](#)  
**Subject:** HB 119 RR Private Property Support  
**Date:** Friday, May 11, 2018 12:21:47 PM

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Senate Finance Committee,

Thank you for your consideration of keeping the private property provisions that were added into SB 86 to protect private property owners along the rail road. We would ask that HB 119 retain those provisions.

Below is our Church's story on why we support private property rights along the rail road.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has 86 congregations and approximately 34,000 members statewide. Since 1965 the Church has owned a campground in Willow, Alaska that hosts families, youth and young adults campouts. In 2017 the camp ground hosted 3,762 guests and in 2016 hosted 3,312 guests. It has a wonderful layout (see attached photo), with a main camp lodge, 18 cabins and 80 acres for recreating, including 35 acres of lakefront property. As you can see in the attached photo, the Alaska Railroad line runs between the lodge/cabin area and the lake.

In the early 2000s the Alaska Railroad required the Church—at our own expense—to put in a 4-foot fence that ran 500 feet on both sides of the track. They also required a 50-foot easement from the center of the tracks. To access the lakefront, the Railroad mandated there could be only one vehicle crossing gate and two man-gates.

Then in 2005, the Railroad came back to the Church and mandated we take down the new fence and put up a 6-foot fence that ran 500 feet on both sides of the track with a new easement they set at 100 feet, again with two man-gates and one vehicle crossing. This work was done at the Church's expense, which was in excess of \$78,000.

After the Church complied with the Railroad's requirements, the Railroad came and cut the padlock the Church had placed on the vehicle gate and installed their own padlock, to which they would not provide a key. The Railroad further mandated padlocking the two man-gates at all times (even when campers are using the lake for activities), meaning access to the lake can only happen by keyed padlock entry and exit. This creates a situation (which fortunately has not happened yet) where no emergency vehicle can access the lakefront, meaning emergency personnel or injured parties would need to come and leave via the man-gate key. First responders would need to locate the padlock key to get someone in or out. In addition, the Railroad has required the Church to pay a yearly fee to access both sides of its property.

Considering the challenges faced in the Church's dealings with the Alaska Railroad's policies, we believe aligning with national railroad standards is the right solution for Alaskans, balancing the need for the Railroad to protect its interests while also preserving reasonable interests of property owners.



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**Treg and Jodi Taylor**

Co-Directors Public Affairs Alaska

**The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints**

(m) [907.952.0610](tel:907.952.0610)

(e) [jodiltaylor@gmail.com](mailto:jodiltaylor@gmail.com)

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