



March 31, 2025

Honorable Alaska State Legislature
Transportation Committee Co-Chairs Rep. Ted Eischeid and Rep. Ashley Carrick
& House Transportation Committee Members

Re: Opposition to House Bill 136

Dear House Transportation Committee Members,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on House Bill 136 – relating to railroad utility corridors. The Anchorage Park Foundation (APF) is a community-based nonprofit that mobilizes public support and financial resources for improving Anchorage parks, trails, and recreation.

For the past 13 years, Anchorage voters have supported bonds to improve parks, trails and trailheads, providing the needed 9% match to leverage federal dollars for active transportation. Four years in a row, voters have passed a total of \$440k in bonds for the Fish Creek Trail, a community supported active transportation project first listed in the 1997 Trails Plan and included in the 2023-2026 Transportation Improvement Plan.

Since 2022, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities and the city Department of Parks & Recreation have managed the project with extensive stakeholder and public engagement. The lengthy process resulted in finding the safest, most cost-effective, lowest-impact route within the railroad right of way. This “preferred alternative” threads the needle to protect estuary habitat, avoid private land, and remain within the approved budget. It will connect key non-motorized facilities and improve safety and accessibility.

House Bill 136 would prioritize the desires of private landowners near railroad easements over public trails and other projects that benefit the whole community. It would prevent the trail from being built and could require the Municipality to pay back federal dollars spent on design.

Parks and trails attract and retain a quality workforce, raise property values and improve health. We strongly oppose House Bill 136 and encourage you to vote against it.

Sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Beth Nordlund".

Beth Nordlund

Executive Director, Anchorage Park Foundation. 3201 C Street, Suite 111, Anchorage, AK 99503
Anchorageparkfoundation.org - Working to improve the parks and trails you love!