

April 3, 2025

Rep. Ashley Carrick, Co-Chair
Rep. Ted Eischeid, Co-Chair
House Transportation Committee

Members of the Transportation Committee:

At the Alaska Railroad, we're proud of our vital role in Alaska's modern development. The construction of our main line fast-tracked the economic development of Southcentral and Interior Alaska, as safe and reliable transportation unlocked the potential of the region. From the founding of Alaska's largest city, to supporting critical projects such as the development of Prudhoe Bay and construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, the Alaska Railroad has been a key driver of growth and progress in our state over the last century.

Recognizing the importance of the rail corridor, the State of Alaska bought the Alaska Railroad from the federal government in 1985. Since then, we've remained committed to our mission of safety and service for the benefit of Alaska – and to fulfill that mission as a self-sustaining corporation. Profitability is critically important for our organization, as the maintenance of a 100-year-old railroad is no small undertaking; 100% of earnings are plowed directly back into repairs and improvements of our tracks, bridges, facilities and rolling stock.

Whether freight or passenger, rail is the safest and most environmentally sustainable transportation option – and frequently the most cost-efficient. It's part of why the Alaska Railroad remains so important to the state today, and why we believe we have an important role to play in the years to come.

We see great potential in Port MacKenzie, both as an asset for future export industries, as well as providing security in redundancy for the most heavily populated part of the state. Multi-modal transportation infrastructure is key for the vitality of a port, an area where Port MacKenzie is currently lacking. The state had already made a significant investment in the 32-mile rail extension from Houston to the port before funding stalled and construction came to a halt. Completing the project, currently estimated at roughly \$275-300 million, is too big for the Alaska Railroad to take on alone, but we believe it's important for Alaska's future.

Similarly, the Northern Rail Extension is not a new project; Phase 1 (of four phases) was completed in 2014, constructing a 3,300-foot bridge over the Tanana River near Salcha. Full completion of the project, at a projected expense of \$1.7 billion, would entail 89 new miles of track connecting North Pole down to Delta Junction, enhancing military access to training at the Joint Pacific Alaska Range Complex and potentially supporting future commercial opportunities

in the Interior — something that would be good for industry without increasing the burden on the state's limited highway system.

These are statewide economic development initiatives in both scope and benefit, and well beyond the Alaska Railroad's ability to achieve alone. That's why we're looking for partnerships across the state to advance these and other key projects, and engaging with private industry, state government, and Alaska's congressional delegation to identify a path forward to new rail infrastructure.

While the Railroad cannot shoulder the initial capital investment of a major rail extension, we are uniquely positioned to support these projects in critically important ways: through technical expertise, project management, competitive grant applications, and a proven track record of infrastructure maintenance and successful rail operations. We've seen the impact of connecting our state's rich natural resources with steel tracks to ports, and the opportunities that increased transportation infrastructure can bring to small Alaska communities, and believe the Alaska Railroad continues to have an important role to play in new economic development in our state.

Sincerely,



Bill O'Leary
President and CEO
Alaska Railroad Corporation



MATANUSKA-SUSITNA BOROUGH

Office of the Mayor

350 East Dahlia Avenue • Palmer, AK 99645

Phone (907) 861-8682 / Fax (907) 861-8669

April 1, 2025

VIA EMAIL

The Honorable Shelley Hughes, District M
The Honorable Robert Yundt, District N
The Honorable Mike Shower, District O
The Honorable DeLena Johnson, District 25
The Honorable Cathy Tilton, District 26

The Honorable Jubilee Underwood, District 27
The Honorable Elexie Moore, District 28
The Honorable George Rauscher, District 29
The Honorable Kevin McCabe, District 30

Dear Senators and Representatives,

We write to you in support of House Joint Resolution (HJR) 14, which champions the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension (PMRE) and encourages a renewed commitment by the Alaska Railroad to a community-minded approach to future rail expansion. PMRE is paramount for advancing economic development and the resilience of our region and the State.

Expanding rail infrastructure can significantly reduce transportation costs, enhance air quality, and improve the efficiency of shipping bulk commodities and materials to and from interior Alaska. This will bolster our State's logistics network and stimulate economic growth and job creation across various sectors.

We support HJR 14 and recognize its significance in advancing Alaska's economic vitality, security, and infrastructure resilience. Investing in critical infrastructure like PMRE can lay the foundation for a more prosperous and secure future for all Alaskans. Thank you for your attention to this matter, and we stand ready to assist in any way we can.

Sincerely,

Edna DeVries

Mayor

Edna.DeVries@matsugov.us

Michael Brown

Manager

Mike.Brown@matsugov.us

cc: Governor Michael J. Dunleavy (via Todd.Smoldon@alaska.gov)
Mr. John Harris



April 6, 2025

Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature
Thirty-Fourth Legislature - First Session
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Letter of Support for House Joint Resolution No. 14

Dear Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of the Susitna Community Council, I am writing to express our strong support for House Joint Resolution No. 14, introduced during the First Session of the Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature. We commend the Legislature's proactive efforts to address critical infrastructure needs that benefit communities across our state, and we believe this resolution represents a vital step forward in supporting Alaska's economic growth and resilience.

The Susitna Community Council recognizes the importance of strategic infrastructure investments, such as those potentially outlined in HJR 14, to enhance connectivity, bolster economic opportunities, and ensure the safety and prosperity of Alaskans. While our community may not directly border the Arctic, we understand the statewide significance of projects like the proposed deep draft Arctic port in Nome, which could serve as a model for similar initiatives. Such developments promise to improve access to resources, facilitate commerce, and strengthen Alaska's position in national and international markets—benefits that ripple outward to communities like ours in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

We urge the Alaska Congressional delegation to pursue all available federal funding opportunities to support this initiative, as outlined in the resolution. Additionally, we encourage the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to collaborate closely with local governments and stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of such projects aligns with the needs and priorities of Alaska's diverse regions. The Community Council



stands ready to support these efforts through advocacy and partnership, recognizing that infrastructure improvements in one part of the state can uplift us all.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to advancing Alaska's future. We respectfully request that this letter be entered into the record as part of the legislative proceedings for House Joint Resolution No. 14.

Should you have any questions or require further input from the Susitna Community Council, please do not hesitate to contact me at (907) 268-9033 or via email at info@susitnacc.org.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Randale Sparks'.

Randale Sparks
President
Susitna Community Council



OFFICE OF MAYOR
CITY OF HOUSTON, ALASKA

Carter R. Cole
Mayor

David Childs
Deputy Mayor

April 2, 2025

To:
Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature
Thirty-Fourth Legislature - First Session
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Letter of Support for House Joint Resolution No. 14

Dear Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of the City of Houston, Alaska, I am writing to express our strong support for House Joint Resolution No. 14, introduced during the First Session of the Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature. We commend the Legislature's proactive efforts to address critical infrastructure needs that benefit communities across our state, and we believe this resolution represents a vital step forward in supporting Alaska's economic growth and resilience.

The City of Houston recognizes the importance of strategic infrastructure investments, such as those potentially outlined in HJR 14, to enhance connectivity, bolster economic opportunities, and ensure the safety and prosperity of Alaskans. While our community may not directly border the Arctic, we understand the statewide significance of projects like the proposed deep draft Arctic port in Nome, which could serve as a model for similar initiatives. Such developments promise to improve access to resources, facilitate commerce, and strengthen Alaska's position in national and international markets—benefits that ripple outward to communities like ours in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

We urge the Alaska Congressional delegation to pursue all available federal funding opportunities to support this initiative, as outlined in the resolution. Additionally, we encourage the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to collaborate closely with local governments and stakeholders to ensure that the implementation of such projects aligns with the needs and priorities of Alaska's diverse regions. The City of Houston stands ready to support these efforts through advocacy and partnership, recognizing that infrastructure improvements in one part of the state can uplift us all.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to advancing Alaska's future. We respectfully request that this letter be entered into the record as part of the legislative proceedings for House

Office of Mayor

P.O. Box 940027 • Houston, Alaska 99694-0027 • Phone: (907)892-6869

• Email: mayor@houston-ak.gov • Website: <https://www.houstonak.us/>

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OFFICE OF MAYOR
CITY OF HOUSTON, ALASKA

Carter R. Cole
Mayor

David Childs
Deputy Mayor

Joint Resolution No. 14. Should you have any questions or require further input from the City of Houston, please do not hesitate to contact me at (907) 892-6869 or via email at ccole@houston-ak.gov.

Sincerely,

Carter R. Cole

Carter R. Cole
Mayor

DENALI BOROUGH

P.O. Box 480 • Healy, AK 99743
Phone: (907) 683-1330 • Fax: (907) 683-1340
Email: dbgov@denaliborough.com
Website: www.denaliborough.org



9 April 2025

Representative Kevin J. McCabe
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Letter of Support – House Joint Resolution 14 (HJR 14)

Dear Representative McCabe,

On behalf of the Denali Borough, I am writing to express our full support for House Joint Resolution 14 (HJR 14), which advocates for the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension. These projects enhance defensive capabilities in the Interior, and improve the Alaska Railroad transportation network. We support a renewed commitment by the Alaska Railroad to embracing a community-minded approach to rail expansion and the development of critical Arctic infrastructure.

Expanding rail infrastructure can significantly reduce transportation costs and improve the efficiency of shipping bulk commodities and materials to and from Interior Alaska. The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and Northern Rail Extension will expand market access for industries such as mining and agriculture and will strengthen our supply chain. The rail extensions bolster our transportation network, providing a more efficient means to transport freight, improving the safety of our roads and highways, and stimulating economic growth.

Millions of dollars have already been invested into planning, permitting, and pre-construction activities for these rail extension projects. Completing this infrastructure will create many new small business development opportunities for Alaskan companies in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Interior. Infrastructure improvements such as these rail extensions provide benefits that ripple out, improving conditions for all Alaskans.

We support HJR 14 and recognize the significance of these rail extension projects towards improving Alaska's economic security.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Noel", is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Chris Noel
Mayor



PO Box 520931
Big Lake, AK 99652-0931

To: Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature
Thirty-Fourth Legislature - First Session
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

April 11, 2025

Subject: Letter of Support for House Joint Resolution No. 14

Dear Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

On behalf of Big Lake Community Council, I am writing to express our strong support for House Joint Resolution No. 14, introduced during the First Session of the Thirty-Fourth Alaska State Legislature. We commend the Legislature's efforts to address critical infrastructure needs that benefit communities across our state, and we believe this resolution represents a vital step forward in supporting Alaska's economic growth and resilience.

Big Lake Community Council recognizes the importance of strategic infrastructure investments, such as those potentially outlined in HJR 14, to enhance connectivity, bolster economic opportunities, and ensure the safety and prosperity of Alaskans. While our community does not directly border the Arctic, we understand the statewide significance of projects like the proposed deep draft Arctic port in Nome, which could serve as a model for similar initiatives. Such developments promise to improve access to resources, facilitate commerce, and strengthen Alaska's position in national and international markets—benefits that ripple outward to communities like ours in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough.

We urge the Alaska Congressional delegation to pursue all available federal funding opportunities to support this initiative, as outlined in the resolution. Additionally, we encourage the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to collaborate closely with local governments and stakeholders to ensure the implementation of such projects aligns with needs and priorities of Alaska's diverse regions. Big Lake Community Council stands ready to support these efforts through advocacy and partnership, recognizing that infrastructure improvements in one part of the state can uplift us all.

Thank you for your leadership and dedication to advancing Alaska's future. We respectfully request that this letter be entered into the record as part of the legislative proceedings for House Joint Resolution No. 14.

Sincerely,

Jodi Riddell
President, Big Lake Community Council



David Pruhs, Mayor

2 April 2025

Rep. Kevin J. McCabe
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK, 99801

RE: Letter of Support - House Joint Resolution 14 (HJR 14)

Dear Representative McCabe,

On behalf of the City of Fairbanks, I am writing to express our strong support for House Joint Resolution 14 (HJR 14), which advocates for the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension, supports increased defensive capabilities at Fort Greely, and encourages both a community-minded approach to rail expansion and the development of critical Arctic infrastructure.

HJR 14 recognizes the significant role that Alaska plays in Arctic strategy, defense operations, and resource development. As the only U.S. state bordering the Arctic Ocean, Alaska is uniquely positioned to contribute to national security and economic growth. The completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension is essential to achieving these goals.

The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension will provide a direct rail link between Interior Alaska and key tidewater access points, reducing transportation costs, improving energy security, and expanding market access for industries such as mining, agriculture, and natural gas. This project will also strengthen supply chains and provide an alternative transportation corridor in the event of natural disasters or port congestion.

Similarly, the Northern Rail Extension is critical to U.S. national security, particularly with the ongoing expansion of the Arctic Mission at Fort Greely. As home to the nation's missile defense system, Fort Greely plays a vital role in protecting the United States and its allies. However, it remains the only military base in Alaska without rail access. Completing this extension will provide a reliable and cost-effective means of transporting military equipment, personnel, and supplies, reinforcing our national defense posture in the Arctic as global competition intensifies.

Significant progress has already been made on both projects. The completion of Phase 1 of the Northern Rail Extension, including the Tanana River crossing, has brought the rail line within 70 miles of Delta Junction and Fort Greely. Likewise, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Alaska Railroad have completed nearly two-thirds of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension, demonstrating the project's feasibility and importance.





David Pruhs, Mayor

The City of Fairbanks also supports HJR 14's emphasis on a community-minded approach to rail expansion. We urge the Alaska Railroad to work transparently with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to ensure responsible and sustainable development. Additionally, we strongly encourage Alaska's congressional delegation to advocate for federal support to complete these vital projects. While other Arctic nations invest heavily in infrastructure, the United States must act to maintain its leadership in the region.

HJR 14 represents a unified commitment to economic growth, national security, and the resilience of Alaskan communities. The City of Fairbanks stands in full support of this resolution and urges its passage to secure a stronger future for Alaska and the nation.

Sincerely,

David Pruhs
Mayor

