

DENALI BOROUGH

P.O. Box 480 • Healy, Alaska 99743
Phone: (907) 683-1330 • Fax: (907) 683-1340
Email: dbgovt@mtaonline.net
Website: www.denaliborough.govoffice.com



Clay Walker, Mayor

April 5, 2017

Senator Cathy Giessel, Senate Resources Committee Chair
Senator John Coghill, Senate Resources Committee Vice-Chair
Members of Senate Resources Committee

Re: Senate Bill Number 86

As I am unable to provide live testimony this Friday on SB 86, please accept this written letter of support. First, I would like to thank Senator Coghill for sponsoring this bill.

In 2009, the Denali Borough Assembly via resolution, supported the 2010 legislation enabling the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) to sell land. The borough followed the drafting of a land sales policy and encouraged the ARRC to consider lands within the Healy Reserve as suitable for sale, being in the best interest of the state. To this date, as far as I know, no ARRC lands have been sold statewide.

The Healy Reserve is the largest railroad reserve in the entire state, totaling 6,226 acres. Within the reserve, the railroad leases land vital to community functions. The Healy River Airport, leased to the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities, is important for personal, recreational and commercial aviation, but is essential to public safety, as it is the primary location for life flights. Granting the ARRC Board the ability to sell land, or exchange with other state entities, will help resolve a number of layered land situations across the state, including here in Healy.

The ARRC land leased to Usibelli Coal Mine for the development of a residential subdivision forms the center of the Healy community. I am writing from railroad leased land now, as the Tri-Valley Community Center (which houses the medical clinic, fire hall, borough office, bank, and state trooper station) sits on leased land. These lands are clearly not needed, and never will be, for railroad operations.

It is time for the legislature to allow the ARRC, through its board, the ability to dispose of lands without legislative approval. State agencies will have more options and Alaskan residents will have a brighter future, with increased opportunities for private land ownership. Private land ownership is fundamental to community growth, state growth, and economic expansion.

Thank you for this opportunity to provide comment on Senate Bill 86.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Clay Walker".

Clay Walker, Denali Borough Mayor