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Rep. Kevin McCabe  
Chair, House Transportation Committee  
Alaska State Capitol Building  
Juneau, AK 99801

February 20, 2023

**Re: Letter of Support for House Joint Resolution No. 19 (HJR019A), “Completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension”**

Dear Committee Members,

Nova Minerals and its subsidiary, Alaska Range Resources (ARR), are pleased to support **House Joint Resolution No. 19 (HJR019A), “Completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension”**. The completion of these important transportation infrastructure projects will provide necessary service to interstate commerce and will result in long-lasting positive impacts on Alaska’s economy. The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension, in particular, is very important for the Estelle Gold project and for the development of the West Susitna region, which will put thousands of Alaskans to work in skilled and unskilled labor positions. Millions of dollars have already been invested into planning, permitting, and pre-construction activities for this project. Completing this infrastructure will create many new small business development opportunities for Alaskan companies in the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, and will help the Port and Borough become a thriving economic center in what is the fastest growing region of Alaska. It will help to reduce overall transportation and freight costs, and will allow for collaborations and partnerships with other entities in the state whose mission is sustainable resource development. A connection of the rail line to Port MacKenzie will lower costs, deliver more goods and services, and help accelerate economic development of the region.

The Northern Rail extension in Alaska's interior is similarly important for economic and transportation development in the State of Alaska. This will provide an increase in defensive capabilities at Fort Greely, Alaska and will encourage a renewed commitment by the Alaska Railroad to a community-minded approach to future rail expansion. It will also benefit Interior Alaska’s thriving mining industry, including the employees and small businesses that work there.

Together, these projects will each:

- benefit mining operations like ours, whose aim is to put thousands of Alaskans to work in the next decade and that produce significant revenue for the state;
- provide transportation to sustain military operations;
- benefit the agriculture industry, bringing more products to more markets;
- improve air quality;
- lower costs and provide a more efficient means of transporting freight.

The extension of the Alaska Railroad from Port MacKenzie to Houston, Delta Junction and Fort Greely is aligned with the long-term goals of the Alaska Railroad Corporation and the State of Alaska to extend rail service to the contiguous United States. The Alaska Railroad has already completed Phase 1 of the Northern Rail Extension project by crossing the Tanana River bringing the rail line within 70 miles of Delta Junction and Fort Greely. The Matanuska-Sustina Borough and the Alaska Railroad have completed nearly two-thirds of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension. This puts Port MacKenzie within 33 miles of the Alaska Railroad rail line from Houston to Fairbanks and the Northern Rail Extension project. Therefore, we strongly encourage the legislature to support the Alaska Railroad in completing these projects.

In conclusion we are pleased to offer this letter of support for this resolution for the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Gerteisen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a prominent loop at the end.

**Chris Gerteisen**

CEO – Director, Nova Minerals