

**SENATE BILL NO. 31**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATORS COWDERY, Wilken

Introduced: 1/21/03

Referred: Transportation, Resources, Finance

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 "An Act relating to a railroad utility corridor for extension of the Alaska Railroad to  
2 Canada and to extension of the Alaska Railroad to connect with the North American  
3 railroad system."

4 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 \* **Section 1.** AS 42.40 is amended by adding new sections to article 5 to read:

6 **Sec. 42.40.460. Extension of the Alaska Railroad.** (a) The corporation may  
7 delineate a proposed railroad utility corridor between the existing railroad utility  
8 corridor of the Alaska Railroad and the border of Alaska and Canada. The railroad  
9 utility corridor shall be at least 500 feet wide. The railroad utility corridor may be  
10 designated for a use identified under AS 42.40.350(b). The corporation may also  
11 identify land for use as rail land that can be developed for terminal, station, and  
12 maintenance facilities, switching yards, and material sites associated with the railroad  
13 utility corridor. The corporation shall prepare a complete legal description of the  
14 proposed railroad utility corridor and the rail land identified under this subsection.

1 (b) In performing the work authorized by (a) of this section, the corporation  
2 shall consider the following factors:

3 (1) grade and alignment standards that are commensurate with rail and  
4 utility construction standards and that minimize the prospect of at-grade railroad and  
5 highway crossings;

6 (2) availability of construction materials;

7 (3) safety;

8 (4) effects on and service to adjacent communities and potential  
9 intermodal transportation connections;

10 (5) environmental concerns;

11 (6) use of public land to the maximum degree possible;

12 (7) minimization of probable construction costs;

13 (8) the location of and the opportunity to obtain access to identified  
14 natural resources that could contribute significantly to the state's economic  
15 development; and

16 (9) prior and established traditional uses.

17 (c) If the corporation delineates all or a portion of the proposed railroad utility  
18 corridor or the associated rail land,

19 (1) the Department of Natural Resources shall, in accordance with  
20 AS 42.40.360(b) and 42.40.370, convey state land within the railroad utility corridor  
21 and associated rail land to the corporation without cost to the corporation and delineate  
22 the route of the railroad utility corridor and the location of the associated rail land in  
23 any system of land records maintained by the Department of Natural Resources under  
24 AS 38.05.035; and

25 (2) the corporation shall

26 (A) as the corporation considers appropriate, exercise its  
27 authority under this chapter to acquire rights-of-way across land within the  
28 railroad utility corridor that is subject to the corporation's power of eminent  
29 domain;

30 (B) upon delineation of the railroad utility corridor and  
31 identification of associated rail land, expeditiously work with federal officials

1 to secure reclassification and withdrawal of federal land for reservations and  
2 rights-of-way across the federal land for use as railroad utility corridor and rail  
3 land; and

4 (C) prepare a report evaluating the effects of construction of an  
5 extension of the Alaska Railroad across federal land; the statement must satisfy  
6 the requirements for an environmental impact statement under 42 U.S.C. 4332.

7 (d) The requirements of AS 38.05 (Alaska Land Act) relating to classification  
8 and reclassification of land are inapplicable to actions taken by the Department of  
9 Natural Resources under this section.

10 (e) The Department of Natural Resources shall retain the classifications and  
11 reservations of land identified for use as a proposed utility corridor and railroad right-  
12 of-way under former AS 19.05.122 until the corporation informs the department in  
13 writing that the land is not needed by the corporation for a utility corridor. If the  
14 corporation informs the department in writing that the land is necessary for use as a  
15 utility corridor, the department shall convey the land to the corporation under (c) of  
16 this section.

17 (f) To complete the work authorized by this section, the corporation may enter  
18 into agreements relating to the work with the federal government, an agency or  
19 instrumentality of the state, a municipality, or a private organization.

20 **Sec. 42.40.465. Extension of the Alaska Railroad to connect with the**  
21 **North American railroad system.** The corporation may investigate extension of the  
22 Alaska Railroad from the border of Alaska and Canada to connect with the North  
23 American railroad system. The corporation may acquire land or interests in land in  
24 Canada as the corporation considers appropriate for the development, construction,  
25 and operation of an extension of the Alaska Railroad to connect with the North  
26 American railroad system.

27 \* **Sec. 2.** AS 19.05.122 is repealed.