

Introduced: 2/16/82
Referred: Special Committee on
Transportation & Resources

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY BETTISWORTH, BUCHHOLDT,
CARNEY, CATO AND METCALFE

2 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 90

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 TWELFTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5 Relating to the request for rights-of-
6 way corridors for the Alaska Rail-
7 road.

8 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9 WHEREAS the Alaska Railroad is a viable, growing business enterprise
10 that affects many of the citizens of the State of Alaska by providing vital
11 transportation services and has the potential of providing greatly expanded
12 service; and

13 WHEREAS the Alaska Railroad has in its enabling Act, The Alaska Railroad
14 Act (43 U.S.C. 975 - 975(g)), authority to extend its track up to 1,000 miles
15 in length; and

16 WHEREAS the State of Alaska and its citizens would benefit by extension
17 of the Alaska Railroad to

18 (1) the Beluga coal fields and a nearby tidewater access on the
19 west side of Cook Inlet from the existing railway in the vicinity of Willow;

20 (2) the Yukon River in the vicinity of Tanana from the existing
21 railway near Nenana;

22 (3) the Ambler mining area via an access corridor extending from
23 the Nenana-Tanana extension through the communities of Alatna and Kobuk;

24 (4) the Canadian border from the vicinity of Eielson as delineated
25 in Route Selection Project X20089 prepared by the State of Alaska Department
26 of Transportation and Public Facilities; and

27 (5) the tidewater access at Valdez from the existing railway in
28 Fairbanks following the Richardson Highway; and

29 WHEREAS the extension of railroad service to the areas set out above is

1 dependent upon acquisition by the Alaska Railroad of the necessary rights-of-
2 way over federal land; and

3 WHEREAS the acquisition of the necessary rights-of-way over federal land
4 is a vital concern of the Alaska State Legislature in evaluating the potential
5 transfer of the Alaska Railroad ownership from the federal government to the
6 State of Alaska because of the impact of right-of-way availability on the
7 railroad's service capability and financial ability to maximize its gross
8 revenue and profit; and

9 WHEREAS sec. 501(a) of P.L. 94-579 of October 21, 1976, authorizes the
10 establishment of rights-of-way by the Secretary of the Interior over public
11 domain land; and

12 WHEREAS the Secretary of Transportation is responsible for overseeing
13 the functions of the Federal Railroad Administration;

14 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests
15 the Secretary of Transportation to request the Secretary of the Interior to
16 create rights-of-way for the construction of extensions of the Alaska Rail-
17 road through the lands of the United States in the State of Alaska
18 as set out above along routes that would

19 (1) be located so that they can meet the grade and alignment
20 standards that are commensurate with the transcontinental rail system stan-
21 dards;

22 (2) be located on the best available foundations and in areas
23 where construction materials are readily available;

24 (3) avoid whenever possible potentially hazardous situations such
25 as highway grade crossings;

26 (4) be placed so that they will serve local communities and enhance
27 local development plans;

28 (5) reflect an awareness of environmentally sensitive areas and
29 issues;

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(6) be 300 feet wide;

(7) minimize construction costs.

COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ronald Reagan, President of the United States; the Honorable Drew Lewis, Secretary of Transportation; the Honorable James G. Watt, Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Robert W. Blanchette, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administration; the Honorable Robert Burford, Director-Designate of the Bureau of Land Management; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.