

Original sponsor: Transportation Committee

1 IN THE SENATE BY THE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE
2 CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 77 (Transportation)
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 Yukon River in the vicinity of Tanana from the existing
19 railway near Nenana;
- 20 (2) the Nome port from the DeLong Mountain Mining District through
21 the Seward Peninsula Mining District;
- 22 (3) the Canadian border from the vicinity of Eielson as delineated
23 in Route Selection Project X20089 prepared by the State of Alaska Department
24 of Transportation and Public Facilities;
- 25 (4) the Kenai-Soldotna area and the Nikishka industrial development
26 area from the existing railway near Moose Pass;
- 27 (5) the tidewater access at Valdez from the existing railway in
28 Fairbanks generally following the Richardson Highway; and
- 29 (6) tidewater access in Southeast Alaska, probably in the vicinity

1 of Haines or Skagway, from an appropriate location along the railway exten-
2 sion in the Yukon Territory; and

3 WHEREAS the state and its citizens could also benefit from a rail system
4 from a port on the Seward Peninsula near Nome to the vicinity of the DeLong
5 Mountains via the Ambler Mining area; and

6 WHEREAS the extension of railroad service to the areas set out above is
7 dependent upon acquisition by the Alaska Railroad of the necessary rights-of-
8 way over federal land; and

9 WHEREAS the acquisition of the necessary rights-of-way over federal land
10 is a vital concern of the Alaska State Legislature in evaluating the potential
11 transfer of the Alaska Railroad ownership from the federal government to the
12 State of Alaska because of the impact of right-of-way availability on the
13 railroad's service capability and financial ability to maximize its gross
14 revenue and profit; and

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

18 WHEREAS the Secretary of Transportation is responsible for overseeing
19 the functions of the Federal Railroad Administration;

20 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests
21 the Secretary of Transportation to request the Secretary of the Interior to
22 create rights-of-way for the construction of extensions of the Alaska Rail-
23 road through the lands of the United States in the State of Alaska as set
24 out above along routes that would

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

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

1 (3) avoid whenever possible potentially hazardous situations such
2 as highway grade crossings;

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

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

7 (6) be 300 feet wide;

8 (7) minimize construction costs.

9 COPIES of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Ronald Reagan,
10 President of the United States; the Honorable Drew Lewis, Secretary of Trans-
11 portation; the Honorable James G. Watt, Secretary of the Interior; the Honor-
12 able Robert W. Blanchette, Administrator of the Federal Railroad Administra-
13 tion; the Honorable Robert Burford, Director-Designate of the Bureau of Land
14 Management; and to the Honorable Ted Stevens and the Honorable Frank
15 Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S. Representative,
16 members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.

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