

ALASKA LEGISLATURE COMMITTEE FILES 2001-2002 8672

10697 SENATE TRANSPORTATION


542



# RECORDS CERTIFICATION



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Date

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MICROFICHE #

HJR 37

**SB**

**3**



# Alaska State Legislature

Official Business

State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

March 27, 2001

✓ Federal Aviation Administration Headquarters  
Manager of Airports Financial Assistance Division  
(Attn: Barry Molar)  
800 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20591

Re: FAA Project Number 3-02-0022-0400

Federal Aviation Administration:

This correspondence is in reference to the Arctic Village Airport Reconstruction project. Invitations to Bid for this project, funded by FAA, were advertised by the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government with Bids scheduled for opening on March 15, 2001. Your agency has since delayed the bid openings until April due to a review of Executive Order 13202 to assess whether the Order essentially prohibiting Project Labor Agreements applied to this project.

We first want to express our strong support for the airport reconstruction project. The airport improvements are badly needed and the project will provide a remote area of the state with much needed employment. This project was initially bid requiring that all on-site work be covered under a Project Labor Agreement (PLA). We are writing during this review to urge your agency to withdraw the PLA requirement of this proposed contract.

This type of labor requirement has never been required in Alaska before and it is truly questionable that any meaningful short or long term benefits to the residents of Arctic Village, the State of Alaska or the federal government will be derived with this type of requirement. Previous government projects have been successful carried out in Alaska without this type of labor union provision and the successful bidders have utilized the local residents to the maximum extent possible while providing quality project performance in a competitive and cost-effective manner.

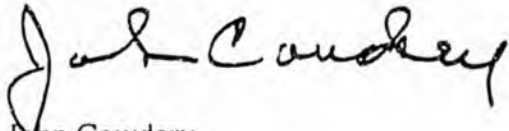
Requiring a Project Labor Agreement in this case seems clearly in conflict with the Executive Order. Although the project grant has been approved it can be clearly argued

that FAA still has considerable influence over the awarding of the bid and the use of the funds. Maintaining this requirement might also jeopardize any state funding support for the project if requested by the Tribal Government.

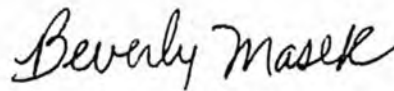
Our staff contacted your Anchorage office and we were advised that deleting the Project Labor Agreement provision should not substantially delay the solicitation of bids. Unless it can be demonstrated that over-riding public benefits will be derived from this type of bid requirement, we strongly suggest that this be dropped and the invitation to bid mirror the way federal government construction grants have always operated in our state.

Thank you for considering our recommendation.

Sincerely,



John Cowdery  
Alaska State Senator



Beverly Masek  
Alaska State Representative



# Alaska State Legislature

Official Business

State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

March 27, 2001

Alaska Region Airports Division  
Attn: David Stelling, Acting Division Manager  
222 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Box #14  
Anchorage, AK 99513-7587

Re: FAA Project Number 3-02-0022-0400

Federal Aviation Administration:

This correspondence is in reference to the Arctic Village Airport Reconstruction project. Invitations to Bid for this project, funded by FAA, were advertised by the Native Village of Venetie Tribal Government with Bids scheduled for opening on March 15, 2001. Your agency has since delayed the bid openings until April due to a review of Executive Order 13202 to assess whether the Order essentially prohibiting Project Labor Agreements applied to this project.

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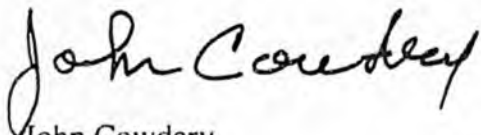
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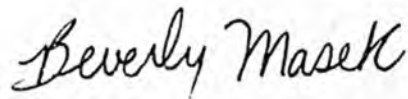
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Thank you for considering our recommendation.

Sincerely,



John Cowdery  
Alaska State Senator



Beverly Masek  
Alaska State Representative

# NATIONAL PARKS CONSERVATION ASSOCIATION

*Protecting Parks for Future Generations*

March 15, 2001

Senator John Cowdery  
Chair, Senate Transportation Committee  
State Capitol, Room 101  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

## **SUBJECT: SB 3 – North Denali Access**

Dear Senator Cowdery,

On February 8, the Senate Transportation Committee conducted a public hearing on SB 3, a bill to require further planning for a proposed new “North Access” road (or railroad) into Denali National Park. In short, SB 3 would appropriate approximately \$330,000 in state general fund revenues to provide a 20% match to existing federal funds (previously appropriated) in the Alaska Department of Transportation budget. The objective is for ADOT to then transfer the funds and responsibility for project planning to the Denali Borough. The intended result is completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) recommending construction and qualifying the project to receive additional state and federal-aid highway funds.

### **Overview and Background**

The purpose of this letter is to provide you with additional information regarding the North Denali Access project, and the potential implications of SB 3. National Parks Conservation Association (NPCA) is America’s only private nonprofit organization dedicated solely to protecting and enhancing the US National Park System for present and future generations. NPCA has more than 450,000 members, over 1,000 of which live in Alaska. Alaskans also serve on NPCA’s Board of Trustees and National Council. NPCA members attended the February 8 hearing via teleconference from various locations.

NPCA has been actively involved in efforts to improve opportunities for visitors (both Alaskan residents and outside tourists) to experience Denali National Park and Preserve. NPCA Alaska Regional Office staff has worked with the National Park Service, Alaska DOT, other state and local officials, the visitor industry and citizens to help develop and secure approval of plans and funding to: upgrade the Visitor Transportation (tour and shuttle bus) System; improve and expand campgrounds; design and implement safety improvements along the Parks Highway through Nenana Canyon; construct a new visitor Science and Discovery Center and service facilities in the park entrance area; improve trails; and develop new opportunities for visitors on the South side of Denali. We are committed to finding ways to better connect people to Denali without dissecting the park – improving visitor opportunities while protecting Denali’s unique character, wilderness and wildlife values. We are taking the same approach in other parks such as Wrangell-

ALASKA REGIONAL OFFICE  
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NATIONAL OFFICE  
1300 19th Street, N.W. • Washington, D.C. 20036  
(202) 223-NPCA(6722) • Fax (202) 659-0650  
npca@npca.org • www.npca.org

St. Elias, where we assisted in acquisition of the historic Kennicott Mine, and are involved in cooperative planning underway for the Chitina-McCarthy Road.

For a number of reasons (some indicated below), NPCA has opposed the North Denali Access Route since it was initially proposed. However, the specific purpose of this letter is to address several mis-statements and questions that arose during the February 8 hearing on SB 3. Whatever the final action on the bill, it is important that members of the legislature and the public understand certain facts and their implications regarding the North Denali Access project.

### **Project Management by the Denali Borough**

Road Powers – During testimony, Alaska Conservation Alliance representative Sue Schrader pointed out that the Denali Borough has “no road powers”. Senator Taylor asked for clarification regarding the meaning of this statement. The Denali Borough was incorporated in 1990 under state law as a Home Rule Borough (municipality), authorized with the following municipal powers: Taxation, Education, Planning & Zoning. These three are the minimum requirements specified by state statute for local government incorporation. The Denali Borough did not request Road (transportation, public works) powers, and these are not included in the municipal charter. In short, this means that the Denali Borough does not have the power (legal authority) to acquire, construct or maintain public roads, or claim or receive any portion of State or federal revenue sharing funds for roads. The Borough could choose to enact an ordinance to adopt road powers but has not done so.

Planning Authority – The Denali Borough does have municipal planning authority and could, therefore, legally conduct and oversee a North Denali Access planning process. However it is relevant and important to consider that the Borough describes itself with the unofficial motto “No Taxes, No Services”, and prides itself on the fact that it has done no land use planning or zoning beyond the minimum necessary to fulfill state legal requirements. Additionally, the Borough has consciously limited its entire planning staff to a single Land Use Planning “Clerk”, rather than establish any planning positions.

Implications - State law allows DOT to enter into an agreement with the Borough to receive funds for planning, and the Borough could use the funds to hire and oversee a private contractor to conduct this study. However, this case would be highly unusual, and could easily lead to further questions and controversy regarding the project. The proposed Denali North Access (whether road or rail line) is the largest proposed capital development project in the entire US National Park System. It would constitute major development for tens of miles into one of the most famous National Parks in the world. For the State of Alaska to transfer planning authority for this project to a local government that has: 1) declined local road powers; 2) declined to actively exercise land use planning or zoning authority; 3) never claimed or qualified for state revenue sharing funds for transportation; 4) never established a formal relationship with the Federal Highway Administration; and 4) never managed a federal EIS process – seems ludicrous on its face.

Without question, management of this process, as with any project affecting Denali National Park, will inevitably be closely scrutinized. The EIS must be conducted pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), a process in which the Borough has no management experience. NEPA guidelines will require that the Borough establish a formal "Cooperating Agency" agreement with the National Park Service, since the project involves potential use of national park lands. There is no doubt this will be a significant undertaking.

Some years ago, the National Park Service's own handling of the planning process for new visitor facilities resulted in a disastrous report by the U.S. Office of the Inspector General. Five years ago, attempts to expedite an Environmental Assessment for a new bus concession contract led to the transfer of the former park superintendent and the need to re-do the EA. In recent years, NPS leadership and staff in Denali have made significant strides, securing final approval of a new plan for the Denali Entrance Area and Road Corridor, and a joint federal-state EIS for Southside Denali. Implementation of these plans, and other recommendations which have already been through the process, would provide a wide range of new improvements and visitor opportunities in the park.

While the State may pass management of the federal-aid highway planning project to a local government, the State will retain ultimate responsibility for the project under law. The State of Alaska is the authorized entity for federal highway funds. Though there are certain legal and technical differences, an appropriate analogy would be the fact that, while local governments may issue bonds, these are ultimately backed by the full faith and credit of the state. Recognition of this fact, and concern over bonding amounts by certain local governments became a major issue in the legislature during the 1980s. NPCA is concerned that turning the planning process over to the Denali Borough could result in problems that reflect poorly on the State and possibly hinder good working relationships between the State, the National Park Service, and the Federal Highway Administration. Our concern here is real. We have a strong interest in improving visitor opportunities in the National Parks in Alaska. Because of Alaska's land ownership patterns and financial picture, virtually every significant improvement (in Denali or other parks) requires a cooperative effort between the multiple state and federal agencies.

#### **Denali Task Force composition**

Several inaccurate and misleading statements were made during the hearing regarding the Denali Task Force – both its make-up and the recommendations contained in its final report.

The statement that task force members were all "close the park" advocates is completely false. The Task Force appointees consisted of a broad spectrum of Alaskans with years of knowledge and experience regarding Denali, including: a senior vice president of Cook Inlet Region, Inc.; director of Commonwealth North; vice president of Holland America/Westours; former board member of Ahtna, Inc.; former owner of a commercial air taxi and flightseeing service; senior engineer from DOT Northern Region; and individuals who at the time were serving on commissions in the Denali and Mat-Su boroughs. I served on the Task Force as a "conservation group" representative, and

proposed a number of additional improvements in both the North and South areas of the park. Many in the legislature also know me as the former Alaska state park director who championed development of projects such as Eagle River Visitor Center, Morgan's Landing, and other access improvements. The simple fact is that the Denali Task Force did not recommend a new North Road, because of its impact on the park, its extraordinary costs, its lack of return on investment to visitors, and because there were (and are) far better options to improve opportunities in Denali.

#### **Position taken by the NPS Advisory Board**

The testimony characterizing the actions of the NPS Advisory Board regarding the Task Force report is also untrue and misleading. The Advisory Board did not "overturn" the Denali Task Force Report. In fact the Board's passed a resolution to "accept" the report and its recommendations, with one amendment regarding North Access. The facts and language of that action are key:

1. The Advisory Board supported a railroad only, but not a road. The record clearly shows the Board chose to endorse a potential railroad route only. The Board specifically amended the wording of the original resolution to exclude the option of a road.
2. The Advisory Board was greatly concerned with the potential for ancillary commercial development that could be triggered by a potential rail spur. The final resolution language reads: "accept the Report of the Denali Task Force" with an amendment "...endorsement of establishing a new northern railroad route contingent upon prior stakeholder agreements on the extent and nature of development in the immediate Wonder Lake area." The discussion record makes it clear that the Advisory Board meant all stakeholders – project promoters, NPS, the state and conservation groups.

#### **South Denali as an alternative**

Statements during the hearing also mis-characterized the South Denali access recommendations and process. The South Denali concept includes an array of visitor services to serve tour groups and independent travelers at several locations (Tokositna area, Chelatna Lake, Byers Lake, Broad Pass and the Dunkle Hills). Developments and attractions include road access, lodging, mountain viewing sites and facilities, visitor centers, campgrounds, trails, and public use cabins. Combined management and development actions would be cooperatively undertaken by NPS, DOT, State Parks and local government. NPCA supports South Denali as a better alternative because of its ability to serve additional visitors in a variety of activities at new locations.

During the hearing it was correctly pointed out that the proposed new South Denali facilities are far from construction and not yet funded. However, we would like to point out the following.

1. The South Denali concept was specifically endorsed by the Denali Task Force and the NPS Advisory Board.
2. An Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) has already been completed. The EIS was cooperatively prepared and signed by the State of Alaska, the National Park

Service, the Denali Borough, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, Ahtna, Inc. and Cook Inlet Region, Inc.

3. The South Denali Consultation Committee (established by the State and comprised of local government officials, tourism representatives, local landowners, and conservation groups) spent more than a year developing a more refined and detailed implementation plan. The committee issued a final report to the Governor and NPS, which was endorsed by both parties.
4. The plan for South Denali development is consistent with the Mat-Su corridor plan for the Petersville Road.
5. The NPS and State of Alaska have cooperated on several additional studies (such as brown bear research) that will be needed to secure funding construction approvals.

Nowhere near this amount of work has been accomplished regarding the North Denali route proposal. Additionally, we believe it will be easier to secure funding for the South Denali development, as it has the support of the National Park Service as well as the tourism industry. Lastly, the South Denali project does not provide an inferior experience. The site is within a quarter mile of the same distance from Mt. McKinley as the existing Eielson Visitor Center on the Denali Park road. It is the area from which Sydney Laurence painted his most famous views of the mountain, and was first suggested by Bradford Washburn (who mapped the mountain and pioneered the famous West Buttress Route). The only actual record that compared mountain viewing from both the South and North, show that viewable days are virtually equal. The North Access route will not traverse the core wildlife viewing valleys (between the spine of the Alaska Range and the "outer range"), so there is no advantage to the North regarding wildlife viewing.

Finally, initial studies completed several years ago (by NPS and DOT) indicate that the North Access route will more likely result in existing visitors extending their stay, rather than serve any substantial number of additional (new) visitors. This is because of the North Access route's close proximity to the existing park entrance, and the fact that the North route will not offer the classic wildlife viewing experience. On the other hand, projections for South Denali indicate that project would serve and accommodate new visitors (i.e. people who might view marine wildlife at Kenai Fjords and then experience the high tundra and mountain views of McKinley). The recent investment and development of two major new lodges on the South side of Denali, indicate that major players in Alaska's visitor economy share this assessment.

NPCA recognizes that there is still opposition among some Alaskans to certain elements of the South Denali plan. While most of the objections have been addressed through the refined Consultation Committee recommendations, no amount of careful planning, appropriate scaling and siting of specific facilities, etc. can overcome the arguments of those who simply want nothing built. National Park developments are always complex and involve some amount of controversy. Overall however, a 90 mile North Access Route through Denali will be far more controversial, far more expensive, and involve more lengthy delays (by orders of magnitude) than implementing the South Denali plan. Opposition will not be limited to local concerns and debates. The issue will be debated

on a national scale – and not solely for its environmental effects. U.S. Taxpayers for Common Sense has already labeled Denali North Access as one of the “10 Worst Highway Projects in America”.

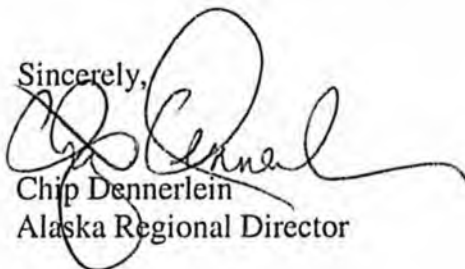
**Conclusion**

NPCA urges the committee to reconsider its support for SB 3. We urge other legislators and state policy makers to take a hard look at this approach, and the project overall. It is evident by this letter and the above facts that many of the assumptions on the record of the February 8 hearing – statements that may have led to support of the bill – are simply false.

The financial cost of this project alone would fund virtually all the other visitor improvements that have currently been approved for the National Parks in Alaska through the established planning process. The current push for this project comes at the precise time when President Bush has just made a commitment to provide \$4.9 billion over the next five years to deal with the existing “backlog” of maintenance and construction in the National Park System. His commitment included a statement that we can not afford expensive new projects until the existing conditions in the parks are addressed. Because Alaska’s parks are young and lack many basic facilities, we believe that Alaska will be somewhat exempted. But dogged pursuit of an enormously controversial and extraordinarily expensive North Denali Access project – that is unsupported by NPS, national taxpayer groups, conservationists, and by return on investment analysis – will strain Alaska’s credibility and opportunities to the limit.

Lastly, Alaskans should also anticipate a significant state financial burden. Even the next step of planning proposed in SB 3 requires the state to appropriate a 20% match. Given the facts surrounding North Denali Access, it is almost inconceivable that Congress will not require state participation in construction should the project ever get to the development stage. We could debate Denali North Access on environmental grounds and its potential effects on the character and values of Denali National Park. We might not agree. But there is no need for that debate, because we should all be able to agree that there are far better ways to invest \$100,000,000 to \$200,000,000 dollars to serve Alaskans, and visitors from across America and the world who wish to experience Denali and the other magnificent national parks in Alaska.

Sincerely,



Chip Dennerlein  
Alaska Regional Director

cc: Senate Transportation Committee Members  
Senate Finance Committee Members  
Tony Knowles, Governor  
Joe Perkins, Commissioner DOT&PF

22-LS0182J  
Cramer  
2/2/01

**CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 3( )**

**IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
TWENTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION**

**BY**

**Offered:**

**Referred:**

<b>Funding Information:</b>	<b>General Fund</b>	<b>\$330,000</b>
	<b>Other Funds</b>	<b>-0-</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$330,000</b>

**Sponsor(s): SENATOR THERRIAULT**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act making a special appropriation for studies for the northern access into Denali**  
 2 **National Park and Preserve; and providing for an effective date."**

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

4 \* **Section 1. STATE MATCH FOR STUDIES FOR NORTH DENALI ACCESS ROUTE.**  
 5 The sum of \$330,000 is appropriated from the general fund as state matching money for  
 6 federal funds authorized in P.L. 105 - 178, sec. 1602, item 1494, to the Department of  
 7 Transportation and Public Facilities for an environmental analysis and other necessary studies  
 8 for the northern access into Denali National Park and Preserve.

9 \* **Sec. 2.** The appropriation made by this Act is for a capital project and lapses under  
 10 AS 37.25.020.

11 \* **Sec. 3.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).

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February 8, 2001

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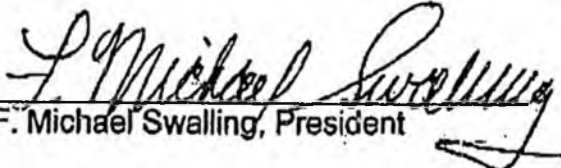
Senator John Cowdery  
Alaska State Senate  
State Capitol, Room 101  
Juneau, AK 99801

Subject: Senate Bill 3 - Denali Access

Dear Senator Cowdery,

I wish to lend my support to Senate bill 3 that would allow the environmental assessment of a Northern Access Route into Denali. The current route is overcrowded in the summer and unused in the winter. The busses are a poor way to show off a truly magnificent area. It's time that the State use its ability to assess other routes that would allow our visitors to enjoy the trip on a year round basis and in comfort.

Sincerely,

  
F. Michael Swalling, President

**THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
DECEMBER 14, 1994  
1:00pm  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**RESOLUTION No.**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Park System Advisory Board in its Special Called Meeting to review the Board's Special Task Force Committee Report for Denali National Park, Alaska, does hereby recommend the following:

**WHEREAS**, the increasing demand for access to Denali National Park and Preserve cannot be met by the single existing Denali Road, and

**WHEREAS**, adequate data exists to suggest that the Denali Road is reaching its carrying capacity, and any appreciable increase in traffic will result in a loss of corridor wildlife, and

**WHEREAS**, Kariakina land owners are guaranteed access to their inholdings, and

**WHEREAS**, the National Park Service has very limited control over development of the private lands at Kariakina, and

**WHEREAS**, each new development puts more pressure on the Denali Road, and

**WHEREAS**, the Denali Committee recognized that the South Slope developments, if completed, would reduce North side pressures "only in part", and

**WHEREAS**, alternative transportation modes and/or routes would prevent the necessity of a "loop road", which was opposed by both the committee and the Park management, and

**WHEREAS**, dedicating a few hundred acres of the six-million acre park for use by the people will not degrade the Park, and will provide for the enjoyment and education of many, and

**WHEREAS**, a North access is the only reasonable means of accommodating the increasing tourist demand, and

**WHEREAS**, the Denali Committee was not able to sufficiently examine alternative transportation modes/access to evaluate their merits.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the National Park System Advisory Board approves the Denali Task Force Committee Report with an Amendment for endorsement of establishing a new northern railroad route contingent upon prior stakeholder agreements on the extent and nature of .

Post-It® Fax Note 7671

Date	1110	# of pages	3
To	Wonder Lake		
From	Kearl		
Co./Dept.	CNSD		
Phone #	459-1406		
Fax #	459-1224		

By: Mayor Jim Sampson  
 Paul Chizmar  
 Hank Heve  
 Bob Logan  
 Layne St. John  
 Cheryl Kigore  
 Hank Bartos  
 Ladd McBride  
 Larry Hackenmiller  
 Dan LaSola

Introduced: 04/11/96  
 Adopted: 04/11/96

RESOLUTION NO. 98-035

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING KANTISHNA HOLDINGS INC.'S PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A NORTHERN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE AND FOR THE BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY SYSTEM TO SERVICE DENALI NATIONAL PARK

WHEREAS, Denali National Park (Denali) is the top visitor destination in Alaska and a critical element in the Alaska visitor/tourism industry and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the existing park road in Denali is at its carrying capacity and is creating adverse impacts on the environment, management problems for the National Park Service, a bottleneck in the visitor/tourism delivery system of Alaska, and access problems for park inholders; and

WHEREAS, no new road access to the interior of Denali is being proposed by the state or federal governments; and

WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14, 1994, resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new northern railroad route to Wonder Lake; and

# CORRECTION

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT(S)  
HAVE BEEN REFILMED TO  
ASSURE LEGIBILITY OR PAGINATION



Central Microfilm Services  
Department of Education & Early Development  
State of Alaska

**THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
DECEMBER 14, 1994  
1:00pm  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**RESOLUTION No.**

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**WHEREAS**, Kariakof land owners are guaranteed access to their inholdings; and

**WHEREAS**, the National Park Service has very limited control over development of the private lands at Kariakof; and

**WHEREAS**, each new development puts more pressure on the Denali Road; and

**WHEREAS**, the Denali Committee recognized that the South Slope developments, if completed, would reduce North side pressures "only in part"; and

**WHEREAS**, alternative transportation modes and/or routes would prevent the necessity of a "loop road", which was opposed by both the committee and the Park management; and

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**WHEREAS**, the Denali Committee was not able to sufficiently examine alternative transportation modes/access to evaluate their merits.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the National Park System Advisory Board approves the Denali Task Force Committee Report with an Amendment for endorsement of establishing a new northern railroad route contingent upon prior stakeholder agreements on the extent and nature of

SENT BY:

15-94 : 4:21PM ;KOMATSU/RANGEL.

202 208 7888:# 3/ 3

**NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
DENALI NATIONAL PARK TASK FORCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
RESOLUTION No. ///**

December 14, 1994

Page 2

development in the immediate Wonder Lake area.

**DONE, this Fourteenth Day of December, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Four, here in  
Washington, DC.**

Post-It® Fax Note 7671

Date	11/10	# of pages	3
To	W. J. J. J.		
From	K. J. J.		
Co./Dept.	C. J. J.		
Phone #	459-1406		
Fax #	459-1224		

By:

Mayor Jim Sampson  
Paul Chizmar  
Hank Hove  
Bob Logan  
Layne St. John  
Cheryl Kigore  
Hank Bartos  
Ladd McBride  
Larry Hackenmiller  
Dan LaSota

Introduced:  
Adopted:

04/11/96  
04/11/96

RESOLUTION NO. 96-035

A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING KANTISHNA HOLDINGS INC.'S  
PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A NORTHERN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY  
TO WONDER LAKE AND FOR THE BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY  
SYSTEM TO SERVICE DENALI NATIONAL PARK

WHEREAS, Denali National Park (Denali) is the top visitor destination in Alaska and a critical element in the Alaska visitor/tourism industry and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, the existing park road in Denali is at its carrying capacity and is creating adverse impacts on the environment, management problems for the National Park Service, a bottleneck in the visitor/tourism delivery system of Alaska, and access problems for park inholders; and

WHEREAS, no new road access to the interior of Denali is being proposed by the state or federal governments; and

WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14, 1994, resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new northern railroad route to Wonder Lake; and

2 / 1 3 0 2

WHEREAS, Kantishna Holdings Inc. has proposed the Denali Railway System to ensure long term resource protection at Denali and to provide year-round access to the Interior of Denali; and

WHEREAS, Kantishna Holdings Inc. has petitioned the Secretary of the Interior to create a new northern railroad right-of-way to the area of Wonder Lake on which to build the Denali Railway System; and

WHEREAS, the proposed Denali Railway System is an environmentally sound and sensible undertaking which will commit substantial private financial investment in permanent infrastructure in Alaska and the creation of hundreds of new jobs in Alaska's economy; and

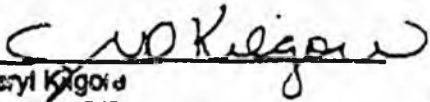
WHEREAS, the visitor/tourism industry of the entire state of Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of new infrastructure created by the Denali Railway System; and

WHEREAS, all of Alaska's "Railbelt," including the community served by the Fairbanks North Star Borough, will benefit from the permanent jobs and other economic activity created by the construction and operation of the Denali Railway System. and

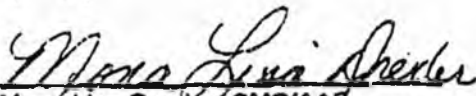
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly and the Borough Mayor endorse the creation of a new northern railroad right-of-way to Wonder Lake and to construct and operate the Denali Railway System within Denali National Park and Preserve.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Fairbanks North Star Borough encourages the Secretary of the Interior to request the National Park Service to act upon the proposal of Kantishna Holding Inc. and create the railroad right-of-way; and that the Fairbanks North Star Borough also encourages the Governor of the State of Alaska and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.

PASSED AND APPROVED THIS 11TH DAY OF APRIL, 1996.

  
Cheryl Kigora  
Presiding Officer

ATTEST:

  
Mona Lisa Drexler, CMC/AAE  
Municipal Borough Clerk

Ayes: Bartos, Logan, LaSota, St John, Hove, McBride, Hackenmiller, Chizmar  
and Kigora  
Noes: None

Introduced by: John Immel

Date: April 22nd, 1996

**RESOLUTION NO. 3652**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING KANTISHNA HOLDINGS INC.'S PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A NORTHERN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE AND FOR THE BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY SYSTEM TO SERVICE DENALI NATIONAL PARK.**

**WHEREAS, Denali National Park (Denali) is the top visitor destination in Alaska and critical element in the Alaska visitor/tourism industry and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and**

**WHEREAS, the existing park road in Denali is at it carrying capacity and is creating adverse impacts on the environment, management problems for the National Park Service, a bottleneck in the visitor/tourism delivery system of Alaska, and access problems for park inholders; and**

**WHEREAS, no new road access to the interior of Denali is being proposed by the State or Federal governments; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14th, 1994 resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new northern railroad route to Wonder Lake; and**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL encourages the Secretary of the Interior to request the National Park Service to act upon the proposal of Kantishna Holding Inc. and create the railroad right-**

of-way; and that the Fairbanks City Council also encourages the Governor of the State of Alaska and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.

PASSED and APPROVED THIS 22ND DAY OF APRIL, 1996.

*James C. Hayes*  
JAMES C. HAYES, Mayor

AYES:  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT:  
ADOPTED:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

*H. P. Kuss*  
HERBERT P. KUSS, City Attorney

ATTEST:

*Nancy L. DeLeon*  
NANCY L. DeLEON, CITY CLERK



Sponsored by: Bencardino

**CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA  
RESOLUTION NO. 96-053**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY  
OF SEWARD, ALASKA, IN SUPPORT OF KANTISHNA HOLDINGS;  
INC.'S PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A NORTHERN  
RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE AND FOR THE  
BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY SYSTEM TO SERVICE  
DENALI NATIONAL PARK**

**WHEREAS**, Denali National Park (Denali) is one of Alaska's most important visitor destinations and is a critical element in the Alaska Visitor/Tourism Industry, and access to Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the existing park road servicing Denali is near its carrying capacity and is creating adverse impacts on the environment, management problems for the National Park Service, a bottleneck in the visitor/tourism delivery system of Alaska and access problems for park in-holders; and

**WHEREAS**, neither the state nor federal government has proposed a new road access to the interior of Denali; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 1994, the National park System Advisory Board approved a resolution accepting the Denali Task Force Report and specifically endorsed the creation of a new northern railroad route to Wonder Lake; and

**WHEREAS**, Kantishna Holdings, Inc., has proposed the Denali Railway System to insure long term resource protection at Denali and to provide year-round access to the interior of Denali; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed new railway system is an environmentally sound and sensible undertaking which will commit substantial private financial investment in permanent infrastructure in Alaska, creating hundreds of new jobs in Alaska's economy; and

**WHEREAS**, new infrastructures created by the Denali Railway System will enhance the City of Seward's visitor/tourism industry, and the creation of permanent jobs and other activity associated with the construction and operation of the Denali Railway System will benefit all of Alaska's railbelt communities;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA, that:**

CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA  
RESOLUTION NO. 96-053

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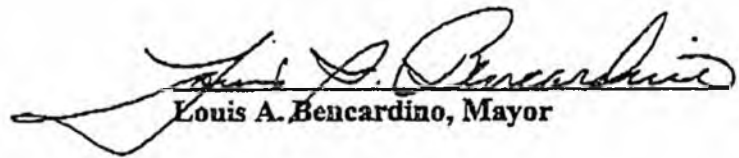
Section 1. The City of Seward endorses the creation of a new northern railroad right-of-way to Wonder Lake and the Denali Railway System as proposed by Kantishna Holdings, Inc.

Section 2. The City of Seward encourages the Secretary of the Interior to direct the National Park Service to act upon the proposal made by Kantishna Holdings, Inc., immediately and requests that Governor Knowles and the Alaska State Legislature give their full support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.

Section 3. This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

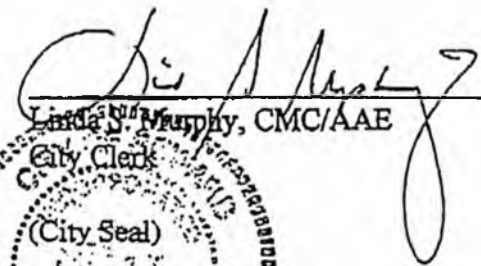

PASSED AND APPROVED by the City Council of the city of Seward, Alaska, this 22nd day of April, 1996.

THE CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA

  
Louis A. Bencardino, Mayor

AYES: Anderson, Bencardino, Crane, Deeter, Keil, King, Sieminski  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None  
ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST:

  
Linda S. Murphy, CMC/AEE  
City Clerk  
  
(City Seal)  
JUNE 1, 1916  
STATE OF ALASKA

CLERK'S OFFICE

APPROVED

Date: 10-08-96

Submitted by: Assemblymembers WUERCH, BELL,  
 Catson, Kendall, Meyer, Von Gemmingen  
 Prepared by: Assembly Policy and Budget  
 For reading: October 8, 1996

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA  
 AR NO. 96-274

A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY ENDORSING THE  
 CREATION OF A NORTHERN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE  
 AND THE BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY SYSTEM

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is the premier visitor destination in Alaska and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure of the Park; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will create new year-round access from the North side of the Park to the Kantishna/Wonder Lake area; and

WHEREAS, no new road access into the interior of Denali is now being proposed by the State or Federal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will be privately funded and will not compete with the publicly funded Denali Southside Development Plan; and

WHEREAS, all of Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of the Denali Railway System, especially Alaska's "Railbelt" including the Municipality of Anchorage - The Gateway to Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14, 1994 Resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new modern railroad route to Wonder Lake.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Anchorage Municipal Assembly resolves:

Section 1: The Assembly endorses the development of the Denali Railway System and requests the Secretary of the Interior to create a railroad right-of-way suitable for such development within the Denali National Park and Preserve.

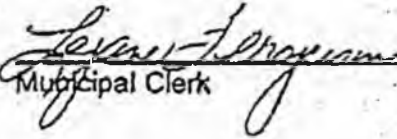
Section 2: That the Assembly encourages the Governor of Alaska, his Commissioners and staff, and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.

1 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Municipal Assembly this  
2 8th day of October, 1996

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Chair

ATTEST:

  
Municipal Clerk

GREATER \* FAIRBANKS  
**CHAMBER**  
OF COMMERCE

250 Cushman St., Suite 20, Fairbank  
phone: (907) 452-1105, fa

e-mail: coc  
website: ww

Introduced By: Transportation Committee  
Date Introduced: September 25, 2000  
Date Passed: October 9, 2000  
Date Transmitted: October 9, 2000

**RESOLUTION 00-1009**

**A RESOLUTION BY THE GREATER FAIRBANKS CHAMBER OF  
COMMERCE SUPPORTING NORTHERN ACCESS  
TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT  
STATEMENT (EIS) STUDIES FOR DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND  
PRESERVE**

WHEREAS the United States Congress has allocated High Priority Funds in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - TEA21 - for the purpose of creating a new northern access corridor into Denali National Park and Preserve (the Park); and

WHEREAS vehicle capacity limits and the seasonal nature of the existing park road severely restricts the number of tourists who can travel into the Park, as well as, the expansion of the shoulder and winter visitor seasons in and around the Park; and

WHEREAS the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce ; the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce; the Alaska Legislature; the Denali, Fairbanks North Star and Mat-Su Boroughs and the Cities of Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nenana, North Pole and Seward have all endorsed by resolution the creation of a new northern railroad route into the Park; and

WHEREAS the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce recognizes State of Alaska legislation reserving portions of the said north access route for selection of a railroad right-of-way and authorizing bonding for the purposes of said right-of-way selection; and

WHEREAS Senator Frank H. Murkowski supports the expeditious use of said allocated TEA21 study fund:

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports the efforts of the Denali Borough to work with State and Federal transportation agencies and others, to utilize said TEA21 High Priority funds in the creation of a new northern access transportation corridor into the Park.

GREATER \* FAIRBANKS  
**CHAMBER**  
OF COMMERCE

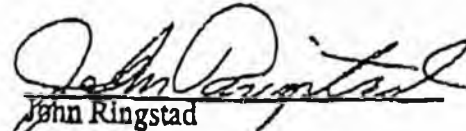
250 Cushman St., Suite 2D, Fairbanks, AK 99701-4665  
phone: (907) 452-1105, fax: (907) 456-6968

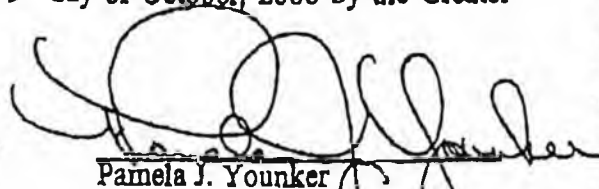
e-mail: [cccralf@mosquitonet.com](mailto:cccralf@mosquitonet.com)  
website: [www.fairbankchamber.org](http://www.fairbankchamber.org)

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution be distributed to:

- Senator Frank Murkowski
- Senator Ted Stevens
- Governor Tony Knowles
- Mayor Johnny Gonzales and Denali Borough Assembly
- Steve Martin, Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve
- Ralph Swarthout, AKDOT&PF
- Interior Delegation

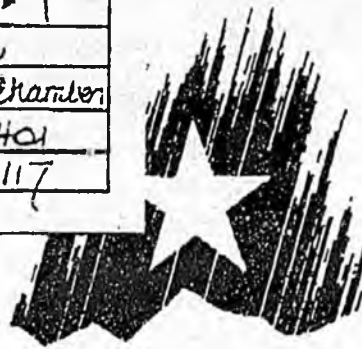
**PASSED** in Fairbanks, Alaska this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2000 by the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce.

  
 John Ringstad  
 Board Chair

  
 Pamela J. Younker  
 President/CEO



Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date	1-16-01	# of pages	1
To	Wilda Foxman	From	Anne Marie		
Co./Dept.	Sen Gene Therricault	Co.	Anchorage Chamber		
Phone #		Phone #	272-2401		
Fax #	(907) 465-3884	Fax #	272-4117		



Anchorage - Star of the North  
Chamber of Commerce

**In Support of the Concept of Railway Access to  
Denali National Park  
Resolution 98-99-9**

**WHEREAS**, Denali National Park is a premier visitor destination in Alaska and access into the park is restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, a railway system will create new year-round access from the north side of the park to the Kantishna/Wonder Lake area; and

**WHEREAS**, no new road access into the interior of Denali National Park is under consideration by the State or Federal governments; and

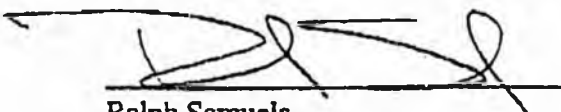
**WHEREAS**, a proposed privately funded railway system will not compete with the publicly-funded Denali Southside Development Plan; and

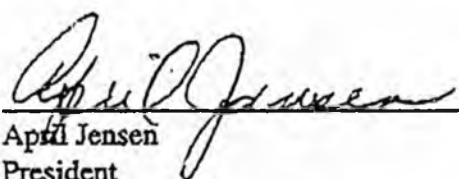
**WHEREAS**, Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of such a railway system, especially Alaska's "Railbelt," including the Municipality of Anchorage - The Gateway to Alaska.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors resolves:

1. That the Chamber endorses the concept of the development of a railway system allowing access to Denali National Park.
2. That the Chamber encourages the State of Alaska and Federal Government to approve the right-of-ways necessary to create a privately funded railway system allowing better access to Denali National Park.

Approved this 19<sup>th</sup> day of February 1999.

  
Ralph Samuels  
1998-99 Chair

  
April Jensen  
President

## ACVB RESOLUTION

A Resolution of the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau  
 in Endorsement of the Concept for  
 Creation of a Northern Railroad Right-of-Way  
 to Wonder Lake and the  
 Building of the Denali Railway System



ANCHORAGE  
 Convention &  
 Visitors Bureau

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is the premier visitor destination in Alaska and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure of the Park; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will create new year-round access from the north side of the Park to the Kantishna/Wonder Lake area; and

WHEREAS, no new road access into the interior of Denali is now being proposed by the State or Federal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will be privately funded and will not compete with the publicly-funded Denali Southside Development Plan; and

WHEREAS, all of Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of the Denali Railway System, especially Alaska's "Railbelt," including the Municipality of Anchorage - The Gateway to Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14, 1994 Resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new modern railroad route to Wonder Lake.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors on this 5th day of October, 1996, resolves:

1. ACVB endorses the concept of the development of the Denali Railway System, and requests the Secretary of the Interior to create a railroad right-of-way suitable for such development within the Denali National Park and Preserve.
2. ACVB encourages the Governor of Alaska, his Commissioners and staff, and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.
3. ACVB will continue to endorse this project based upon the current proposal, presented as the "Denali Railway System."

Max Lowe  
 Chairman

Bill Elander  
 President & CEO

524 W. Fourth Avenue  
 Anchorage, Alaska  
 907 501-2212

907-276-4118  
 Fax 907-278-5559  
 email:acvb@alaska.net

November 11, 1997

TO: The Interior Delegation

FROM: Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce

RE: 1998 Legislative Priorities

1. **Priority:** Northern Access to Denali National Park  
**Reason:** The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce is in support of a Denali National Park northern route access, so that tourism may continue to grow.
2. **Priority:** Geophysical Mapping  
**Reason:** Geophysical mapping enables the State of Alaska to learn where large deposits of ore occur.
3. **Priority:** Forest Products Industry  
**Reason:** The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce has long supported a strong and viable timber industry in the Interior for economic growth.
4. **Priority:** DOT Funding for the Northern Region  
**Reason:** The ADOT&PF's Northern Region portion of annual FHWA monies through ISTEA has dropped dramatically in recent years. We believe that the resulting concentration of expenditures within the Central Region is shortsighted. The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce supports the review and revamping of ADOT&PF's STIP project priority ranking system to better address the identification and development of road projects which provide or improve access to economic development sites: enabling revenue generation by industries such as mining, petroleum development, tourism, timber and fishing.
5. **Priority:** The Alaska Railroad  
**Reason:** The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce supports the maintenance and upgrade of existing lines and the possible expansion of the railroad to enhance economic development opportunities to include, but not limited to, the mining, oil, timber and tourism industries. The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce also urges the retention of the Alaska Railroad governance "as is", preserving distinct benefits of Alaska Railroad's independent Board of Directors and the existing non-governmental arm's length relationship with the State of Alaska.

*DRAFT*

#93-1

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE KANTISHNA RAILROAD  
AND DENALI NATIONAL PARK ACCESS**

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is one of the top two visitor destinations in Alaska, and;

WHEREAS, the current limits on access into Denali National Park restrict many visitors from entering the park that would like to, and;

WHEREAS, no additional access to the interior of the park is included in the South Denali Concept Plan now under consideration, and;

WHEREAS, the National Park Service Denali Task Force Report recently released did not provide for any immediate increase in the capacity on the current north entrance road, and;

WHEREAS, the National Park Service Denali Task Force Report described the Kantishna Railroad concept as captivating, and;

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is a critical element to the Alaska Visitor Industry throughout the state, and;

WHEREAS, the Kantishna Group, Inc. has proposed an innovative and unique general purpose tourism railroad from the area of Lignite to the area of Kantishna to provide access to the growing number of visitors to Alaska.

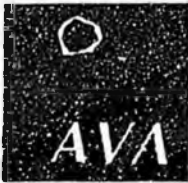
NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Visitors Association Board of Directors strongly supports the Kantishna Group, Inc.'s efforts to construct and operate a general purpose tourism railroad into Denali National Park.

NOW THEREFORE ALSO BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Visitors Association Board of Directors strongly supports the State of Alaska in its study and development of other methods of access into the park which will enhance the Alaska Visitors Industry.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that AVA supports and encourages the National Park Service in its efforts to create appropriate, environmentally sound means of access to the park to serve the people of the United States according to its mandate.

*Adopted by the AVA Board of Directors*

6.9.2.6



# ALASKA VISITORS ASSOCIATION

3201 C Street, Suite 403 • Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Tel: (907) 561-5733 • Fax: (907) 561-5727

1994-95

**Executive Officers**

**President**

John Binkley

Riverboat Discovery

Fairbanks, Alaska

**1st Vice President**

Dean Brown

Princess Tours

Seattle, Washington

**2nd Vice President**

Rob Engelbrecht

TENISCO Helicopters

Juneau, Alaska

**P Government Relations**

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Sitka Tours

Sitka, Alaska

**Treasurer**

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Westours, Inc.

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**Secretary**

Laurie Herman

Alascon, Inc.

Anchorage, Alaska

**Past President**

Dennis Brandon

Westmark Hotels

Anchorage, Alaska

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Southeast Seveclaring

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Jerry Jernigan

Tok RV Village, Inc.

Paul Landis

Era Aviation

Linda McLaughlin

Delta Air Lines

Gary Odie

Alaska Highway Cruises

Arne Olsson

Inter Island

Brad Phillips

Phillips Cruises & Tours

Justin Ripley

Denali Park Resorts

Roger Silvi

New Directions Tours

Tom Tougas

Kenai Fjords Tours

Brad Walker

Alaska Airlines

Tim Worthen

Rivgeny Cruises

Tina Lindgren

Executive Director

## Alaska Visitors Association Position on Denali National Park Visitor Access

May 1995

### INTRODUCTION

The visitor industry recognizes and supports a balance between accessibility, preservation of park resources and provisions for visitor enjoyment and resource interpretation. The Alaska Visitors Association is evaluating specific alternatives to visitor access into Denali National Park. Issues central to this evaluation include increasing visitor demand for park access and the need to protect the natural resource and the visitor experience.

In AVA's opinion, short-term and long-term solutions exist and should be implemented. Most critical in the short term is to address demand for access within the Park.

The 10-20 year needs of over one million Park visitors per year must also be addressed. This demand will come from both organized tour groups and independent highway and fly/drive visitors to Alaska. Several long-term solutions have been reviewed by AVA and merit further examination. These include, the Alder Point Tram, the Petersville Road extension and the north "Stampede Rail/Road" access.

### POSITIONS ON SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS:

#### Extension of the Short Tour to Teklanika

**AVA favors:**

- Tour access to Teklanika for all Natural History Tour buses. The demand is expected to grow to about 110,000 passengers or about 2,500 buses by the year 2000, and maintain a 5% growth rate thereafter.
- Improvement or hardening of the road surface to Teklanika to mitigate the ongoing dust problem, create a more comfortable ride, and reduce maintenance.
- Ongoing use of the mountain viewing pullout at Primrose.
- Construction of loop trails, a visitor shelter and interpretive signs at Teklanika.

This tour would be offered at three general departure times a day. The average tour time would be 3-4 hours. Capacity would be a maximum of 52 passengers per bus on current equipment with additional capacity determined by new equipment in the future.

The extended Short Tour would create visitor acceptance as a substitute for the Tundra (Wilderness or Wildlife) Tour. The Tundra Tour, and the NPS buses that penetrate further into the Park are almost at capacity. By extending the Short Tour to Mile 30.1, visitors will have a sense of traveling substantially into the Park. The Park road is widened to this point, and hardening the surface of the road would accommodate higher density buses and less environmental impact. The road between Mile 13 and 30.3 has been widened to two lanes with the intent that it would be paved similarly to the first 13 miles. Surface hardening will ensure that the road shoulders are stronger to accommodate larger motorcoaches, and eliminate dust problems. The Tundra Tour would be marketed to multi-night stay visitors who want a more in-depth experience of the Park.

#### **Re-allocate professional photographer permits**

Currently, professional photographers are allowed up to 10 permits per day to take their private vehicles into the National Park. The NPS views one of their vehicles as having the same wildlife impact as one bus. We recommend reducing the professional photographer limit from 10 to 5 permits per day, and re-allocating five additional vehicles to the Tundra/Wildlife tour buses. This could be put into effect immediately. It does not divert from the Park Master Plan.

An increase of 5 bus tours per day would allow 550 more buses (26,000 additional passengers) per summer season. This is a 25% increase in concession tour capacity without additional impact.

AVA received verbal agreement from Alaska's congressional delegation and from the former Denali Park Superintendent (Russ Berry) on this proposal.

#### **Recommendations for road improvements**

AVA recommends several improvements to Denali Park Road. With respect to Segment 2 (Savage to Teklanika) we recommend reconditioning the existing foundation and a new surface treatment.

At a minimum, we recommend that the chronic dips and heaves in the roadway be excavated and replaced with quality materials, using geotextiles and insulation where permafrost is encountered. A structurally sound foundation is essential to reducing maintenance costs for the roadway. A quality surface treatment to protect the base and subgrade is also essential. We recommend something like a 6-inch crushed aggregate base with a 3% minimum crown, prime coat and sealed surface with a one-inch high float emulsion asphalt blended and crushed aggregate leveling course. Drainage improvements should also be made, including replacing and adding culverts where necessary and elevating the road prism in low-lying areas.

We also support safety improvement recommendations along other segments of the Denali Park Road as outlined in Table 1: Summary of Recommendations (Route 10), on page vii of the Road System Evaluation study for Denali National Park & Preserve, April 1994.

## POSITION ON LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS:

Long-term solutions have been reviewed by AVA and those listed below merit further consideration. We understand NPS is currently examining the Tokositna site. We would like to work with NPS in determining the feasibility of the Petersville-Tokositna area for a variety of visitor activities.

### **Petersville Road/Tokositna Glacier Alternative**

This alternative calls for an improved and extended Petersville Road to Tokositna Glacier site at Long Creek. This site is considered by some as the best view corridor of Mt. McKinley. Tokositna Valley and surrounding foothills contain important habitat areas for several species of wildlife, including bear, wolf and swan.

### **Alder Point Tram Alternative**

AVA recommends further study of the 2-stage Aerial Tramway at Alder Point extending from the south end of Denali State Park several miles toward, and into, Denali National Park. The Tram would travel from the George Parks Highway over the Chulitna riverbed with potential views of bears and other wildlife. Passengers would change trams at midpoint, then continue to a high viewing platform on Alder Point overlooking Ruth Glacier and a spectacular view corridor toward Mt. McKinley.

The Alder Point Tram Alternative addresses several important objectives:

- Provides a second gateway into Denali National Park.
- Increases capacity into Denali National Park to satisfy unfulfilled demand.
- Protects wildlife and natural environment through a controlled access design and aerial pathway.
- Connects the National Park to the region's main transportation artery - the George Parks Highway.
- Satisfies three primary visitor motivators to the region: entry into Denali National Park, good views of Mt. McKinley, and opportunities to view wildlife.
- Meets the special needs of disabled and older Park visitors.
- Relieves traffic pressure on Denali Park Road.
- Can be included in existing tour itineraries without difficulty.

### **Stampede Rail/Road Alternative**

This alternative calls for construction of a new highway or rail from the Healy area into Kantishna and allow for development of a resort. Developing a loop consisting of the Denali road and the new Stampede road could double the number of passengers traveling the current road without an increase in traffic along the Denali Park Road. It would also solve legal access and traffic problems if an RV Park or other facility at Kantishna demands visitor access in excess of current levels.

## APPENDIX A

### **Background on Denali National Park Access**

Denali National Park is one of the main visitor attractions in Alaska. The number of annual visitors is limited by the park's capacity to accommodate vehicle access. There is pent-up demand for more access into the Park. The park's capacity is regulated by a General Management Plan and the capacity of the transportation systems that serve the Park. Main attractions of the National Park are wildlife and scenery. Wildlife is protected by a designated Wildlife Conservation Area located in the southern portion of the Park. The key scenic attractions in the Park are Mount McKinley and the Alaska Range.

The visitor industry sees three important motivators for visitors entering Denali National Park: a) to physically be within the Park; b) to view Mt. McKinley and c) to view free-ranging wildlife.

It is an industry-known fact that visitors want to visit Denali National Park in addition to viewing Mount McKinley and seeing wildlife. Denali National Park is a part of their national legacy which they wish to experience personally. The average age of Denali region visitors is 52 years, with 30% over the age of 65. Many visitors are not physically capable of enjoying foot trail access into the Park.

Denali's popularity and its present limited capacity to accommodate more daily visitors makes it one of the "bottlenecks" to visitor growth in Alaska. This frustrates an industry that wishes to satisfy the strong visitor demand to the Park. The desire to increase the capacity of Denali has led to many planning studies probing alternate access routes and transportation systems. They include: the Alternative Transportation Study into Denali National Park (NPS); the North Denali Road Study (State DOT/PF); the Denali Concept Plan (NPS); and the South Denali State Park Planning (State DNR).

### **Current Park Access**

Denali Park Road stretches from its junction with Mile 237 of the George Parks Highway some 93 miles to the mining area of Kantishna. The road, completed in 1938, is paved from mile 0.0 at George Parks Highway to mile 13.1 at Savage River. In the 1960s the road, gravel-surfaced beyond mile 13.1, was widened to meet current road width standards to mile 31.3 at Teklanika River. Beyond Teklanika, the road is narrow, twisting, and in many places, less than two lanes wide.

The road is open to private vehicles for the first 13 miles. Road travel beyond Savage River (mile 13.1) is by permit only during the main visitor season. For 3 days, beginning with the second Friday after Labor Day, 300 permits are issued per day by a lottery system for travel the length of the road. In early spring and late fall, the road is open to Mile 30.3 at Teklanika.

### **Commercial Photographer Permits**

Up to 10 permits per day are issued to commercial photographers. An average of 2 passengers per photo permit during the 120-day season accommodates 2,400 persons.

**ARAMARK Tour Permits**

ARAMARK Leisure Services, Inc. dba Denali Park Resorts is authorized by concession contract to operate tour buses on the park road. They operate the (short) Natural History Tour to mile 17.5 up to 30 times a day, not to exceed 3 departures per half hour. They also operate the Denali Tundra & Wildlife Tour to mile 60.6 at Stony Dome (2,089 trips per season, with a per trip capacity of 52 persons for a total passenger capacity of 108,628, from May 26 to September 13); and the Visitor Transportation System (VTS) under a fixed schedule determined by NPS with a maximum seasonal capacity of 3,394 bus trips. Given an average of 30 passengers per bus trip the VTS estimated capacity is approximately 101,820 passengers.

## APPENDIX B

### Visitor Demand for Alaska and Denali National Park

Adventure travel and Ecotourism hold great promise for the travel industry in general, and for Alaska in particular. The use of federal lands and state parks is going up. A majority of Americans prefer a naturalist vacation; 54% of the population took naturalist trips within the last 12 months. Collectively, the travel industry experienced 15% growth in adventure travel/ecotourism during 1995 (source: ATMC marketing plan).

A sizable increase in the number of vacationing households can be projected through the turn of the century (1995-2000). All householders – up 13.6%. Domestic vacationers – up 15%. Domestic vacationers who travel by plane – up 15%. (Source: data by Mediamark Research, Inc., projections by American Demographics.)

A rapidly aging population is building the size of Alaska's target market at a phenomenal rate. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people aged 50-plus will increase by 56% (source: American Demographics, April 1994).

More than half of all visitors to Alaska (57%) travel as independent travelers (among these travelers, approximately one-third purchase some sightseeing while in Alaska). The remaining 44 percent travel on some type of package tour. (Source: Alaska Visitors Statistics Program (AVSP))

The vast majority – 83.9% – of visitors to Alaska are U.S. citizens (source: AVSP).

Of summer visitors (when Denali Park is open), 36% – or 301,200 – visited the Denali Park or its gateway, McKinley. On a 7-point scale, those who visited Denali/McKinley rated their overall trip a 6.2; and compared to expectations, a 5.8; and in terms of value for money, a 5.3 (source: AVSP Patterns Opinions and Planning).

Tourism in Alaska will continue to see growth of 5.5% per year in the Summer, and a 3% increase per year in Fall, Winter Spring to the year 2000, based on the growth curves of the Alaska visitor industry since 1985. This would translate into a Denali/McKinley visitor count of 450,000 if the 36% Denali National Park visitation rate of all Alaska's visitors held steady.

## APPENDIX C

### Proposed Short Tour Itinerary (Natural History Tour)

- Mile 0: George Parks Highway - pick up at various area hotels along.
- Mile 3.4: NPS Headquarters - discussion on historical element, taiga forest, moose habitat.
- Mile 7.0: Taiga/Tundra Ecotone - caribou and occasional bear habitat.
- Mile 9.4: First view of Mount McKinley.
- Mile 12.8: Historic Savage Cabin - interpretation by NPS ranger, short loop trail through taiga forest with interpretation stations.
- Mile 14.8: Savage River - glacial valley, possible sheep or wolf sightings.
- Mile 17.3: Primrose Ridge - mountain view and rest stop.
- Mile 22.7: Sanctuary River - scenic vistas, alternating taiga and tundra, possible moose sightings.
- Mile 30.1: Teklanika Rest Stop - visitor shelter, viewing platform, restrooms, loop trail, interpretive stations and NPS interpreters.
- Miles 30.1: Return to George Parks Highway.

10-01 10L 11:17

P. 02

# ***ALASKA DEMOCRATIC PARTY***

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## **RESOLUTION 97-012**

### **SUPPORT FOR KANTISHNA HOLDINGS INC.'S PROPOSED NORTHERN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE**

Whereas, Denali National Park (Denali) is the top visitor destination in Alaska and a critical element in the Alaska Visitor/Tourism industry and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and

Whereas, the existing park road in Denali is at its carrying capacity and is creating adverse impacts on the environment; management problems for the National Park Service; a bottleneck in the visitor/tourism delivery system of Alaska; access problems for park inn holders; and

Whereas, no new road access into the interior of Denali is being proposed by the local, state, or federal government; and

Whereas, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14, 1994, Resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new northern railroad route to Wonder Lake; and

Whereas, Kantishna Holdings Inc. has proposed the Denali Railway System to ensure long-term resource protection at Denali and to provide year-round access to the interior of Denali; and

Whereas, Kantishna Holdings Inc. has petitioned the Secretary of the Interior to create a new northern railroad right-of-way to the area of Wonder Lake on which to build the Denali Railway System; and

Whereas, the proposed Denali Railway System is an environmentally sound and sensible undertaking which will commit substantial private financial investment in permanent infrastructure in Alaska and the creation of hundreds of new jobs in Alaska's economy; and

Whereas, the visitor/tourism industry of the entire State of Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of new infrastructure created by the Denali Railway System; and

Whereas, all of Alaska's "Railbelt," including the community served by the Interior Democrats will benefit from the 500 permanent jobs and other economic development activities created by the construction and operation of the Denali Railway System; and

Whereas, the Interior District Democrats in convention, the National Park System Advisory Board, the Alaska Legislature (HIR 28 [1994]) and (SJR 25 [1997]), the Denali Borough, the Fairbanks North Star Borough, the City of Nenana, the City of Fairbanks, the City of Seward, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough, the Alaska State Commission on Federal Areas, the Alaska Visitors Association, the Fairbanks Building and Construction Trades Council (AFL-CIO), and the

---

Associated General Contractors of Alaska have all endorsed creating a new northern railroad right-of-way in Denali National Park and Kantishna Holdings Inc.'s proposal; and

Whereas, the Interior Democratic Committee recognizes that the above elements of petition with additional post-date endorsements shown in bold print, did comprise a Resolution of Endorsement previously passed by the Interior Democrats in convention;

Now therefore be it resolved that the State Central Committee of the Alaska Democratic Party supports Interior Democrats and the proposal as indicated above; and

Let it be further resolved that the State Central Committee of the Alaska Democratic Party encourages the Secretary of the Interior to direct the National Park Service to act upon the proposal by Kantishna Holdings Inc. to create said railroad right-of-way immediately; and

Let it be finally resolved that the State Central Committee of the Alaska Democratic Party strongly encourages the Governor of Alaska, his commissioners and staff, and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System as proposed by Kantishna Holdings Inc.

*Done in  
Open Meeting  
of the  
State Central Committee  
ALASKA DEMOCRATIC PARTY  
September 13, 1997  
Fairbanks, Alaska*

*s/Carolyn Covington*

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Carolyn Covington, Secretary

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A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING A NORTHERN TRANSPORTATION  
CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS)  
STUDY FOR DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

BY

THE ASSOCIATED GENERAL CONTRACTORS OF ALASKA

WHEREAS, the United States Congress has allocated High Priority funds from the United States Department of Transportation, Federal Highway Administration to the State of Alaska in the amount of \$1,300,000 and

WHEREAS, Senator Frank Murkowski supports the use of this funding toward developing a Northern Transportation Corridor into Denali National Park and Preserve (the Park), and

WHEREAS, the State of Alaska has not taken any action to use the High Priority funding on a Northern Transportation Corridor investigation into the Park, and

WHEREAS, local governments may assume responsibility of State of Alaska transportation projects under "Transfer of Responsibility Agreements" with the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities, and

WHEREAS, the Denali Borough has passed a Resolution to become the local sponsor for the preliminary engineering (an Environmental Impact Statement) toward developing a northern transportation corridor into the Park, and

WHEREAS, the proposed Environmental Impact Statement is required under the National Environmental Protection Act in consideration of any federal actions including funding for the transportation corridor investigations, and

WHEREAS, High Priority funded projects require a 20% local funding match, and

WHEREAS, the present public transportation system into the Park severely restricts the number of tourists wishing to travel into the Park, and

WHEREAS, investigation into a northern transportation corridor into the Park could provide the foundation for a future transportation system that could accommodate large numbers of visitors now denied access, and

WHEREAS, the Associated General Contractors of Alaska, represented by 596 member companies support expansion of transportation access projects important to both the state and nation.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Associated General Contractors of Alaska requests the Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities recognize the Denali Borough as the project sponsor and prioritize the project in the State Transportation Improvement Program for both authorization to begin work and funding.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Associated General Contractors of Alaska requests the State Administration and the State legislature to provide the matching funds to fully utilize the federal dollars available for this important project.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be distributed to:

Senator Frank Murkowski  
Senator Ted Stevens  
Representative Don Young  
Governor Tony Knowles  
The Alaska Legislature  
Commissioner, Department of Transportation & Public  
Facilities  
Mayor John Gonzales, Denali Borough  
Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve

APPROVED this 10th day of November 2000 by the Board of Directors of the Associated General Contractors of Alaska.



Michael Miller, President

# ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION



Executive Office  
(907) 265-2414  
FAX (907) 258-1458

November 2, 1993

Mr. Laurence H. Irving, President  
Mr. Joseph N. Fields, Director  
Kantishna Group Incorporated  
P. O. Box 71047  
Fairbanks, AK 99707-1047

Re: Letter of Interest

Dear Sirs:

It was a pleasure to meet with you and Mr. Trueblood recently to discuss Kantishna & Wonder Lake Railroad Project and its relationship to the Alaska Railroad.

The Alaska Railroad serves as a major component of the tourism infrastructure in the State of Alaska providing service from Seward to Fairbanks and all points in between. Denali National Park is one of the main destinations for visitors to Alaska and is served daily during the summer season by the Alaska Railroad.

The development of rail spur and facilities in Denali National Park as proposed by the Kantishna Group, Inc., could serve to eliminate the bottleneck in the visitor delivery system in Alaska that currently limits the expansion of this very important industry.

This letter is to formally confirm our interest in participating in your project to the extent we can under the laws and regulations which govern us. Specifically, we are prepared to work with Kantishna Group, Inc., to establish areas of mutual potential benefit such as:

- Use of ARRC land for switching, electrical intertie and terminal use;
- Management and operations;
- Engineering and Construction;
- Reservations and Marketing; and
- Other activities which may prove mutually beneficial.

Corporate Address:

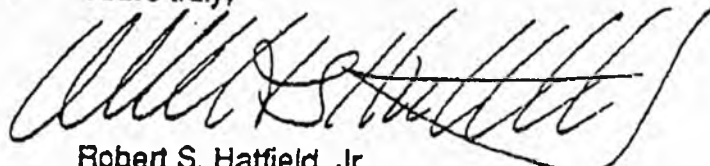
P.O. Box 107500, Anchorage, Alaska 99510-7500

327 West Ship Creek Avenue, Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Mr. Laurence H. Irving  
Mr. Joseph N. Fields  
November 2, 1993  
Page Two

We look forward to meeting with you soon to discuss your basic needs and in what way the Alaska Railroad Corporation can assist you.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Robert S. Hatfield, Jr.", written in dark ink.

Robert S. Hatfield, Jr.  
President and Chief Executive Officer

**THE NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
DECEMBER 14, 1994  
1:00pm  
DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR**

**RESOLUTION No.**

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the National Park System Advisory Board in its Special Called Meeting to review the Board's Special Task Force Committee Report for Denali National Park, Alaska, does hereby recommend the following:

**WHEREAS**, the increasing demand for access to Denali National Park and Preserve cannot be met by the single existing Denali Road, and

**WHEREAS**, adequate data exists to suggest that the Denali Road is reaching its carrying capacity, and any appreciable increase in traffic will result in a loss of corridor wildlife, and

**WHEREAS**, Kartishna land owners are guaranteed access to their inholdings, and

**WHEREAS**, the National Park Service has very limited control over development of the private lands at Kartishna, and

**WHEREAS**, each new development puts more pressure on the Denali Road, and

**WHEREAS**, the Denali Committee recognized that the South Slope developments, if completed, would reduce North side pressures "only in part", and

**WHEREAS**, alternative transportation modes and/or routes would prevent the necessity of a "loop road", which was opposed by both the committee and the Park management, and

**WHEREAS**, dedicating a few hundred acres of the six-million acre park for use by the people will not degrade the Park, and will provide for the enjoyment and education of many, and

**WHEREAS**, a North access is the only reasonable means of accommodating the increasing tourist demand, and

**WHEREAS**, the Denali Committee was not able to sufficiently examine alternative transportation modes/access to evaluate their merits.

**NOW, THEREFORE**, the National Park System Advisory Board approves the Denali Task Force Committee Report with an Amendment for endorsement of establishing a new northern railroad route contingent upon prior stakeholder agreements on the extent and nature of.



750 W. 2nd Ave. #109, Anchorage AK 99501 / Ph. 907-258-6171 / Fax 907-258-6177

P.O. Box 22151, Juneau AK 99802 / Ph. 907-463-3366 / Fax 907-463-3312 / unite@akvoice.org

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### **SB 3: Appropriation to Study Northern Denali Access**

TO: Senate Transportation Committee members  
DATE: February 8, 2001

Alaska Conservation Alliance and Alaska Conservation Voters are sister nonprofit organizations dedicated to protecting Alaska's environment through public education and advocacy. Our 44 member organizations and businesses represent over 35,000 registered Alaskan voters. Many of our members each year join with visitors from out of state and other countries to enjoy activities within our national parks. We are particularly committed to the conservation of the wilderness resources and values of our park lands.

We are opposed to Senate Bill 3 for the following reasons:

#### **The Second Access Route is Fiscally Irresponsible.**

- Building a road or railroad that begins only 17 miles north of an existing road and ends at the same place makes little sense. It is difficult to justify putting \$264,000 towards a study for a speculative and unnecessary project when the same money could be put to use building actual projects. Local Alaskans will likely question why Denali is getting an additional transportation corridor when so many places have none at all.
- The final price tag of \$87 – \$213 million will likely require a substantial match by the state, especially since the National Park Service opposes the project.

#### **Better Alternatives Exist to Promote Denali Tourism**

- Demand for improved northern access has not been demonstrated, locally or nationally. The National Park Service projects its current plan can accommodate increased visitation for the next 15-20 years. Denali is world renowned for its exceptional wildlife viewing. However, wildlife is scarce along the proposed northern route and viewing is poor. Provisions for the enjoyment of the park are sorely lacking in the north access option and run the risk of leaving visitors dissatisfied with their experience.

Continued

Conserve Alaska. It's Only Natural.

- Denali National Park is not proposing a closed-door policy towards park users. Rather, it has identified viable alternatives to the controversial North Access project; ones that have greater vision, greater good for the greater number, are less expensive, disperse use and the inevitable impacts to the park's resources, widens the sphere of economic opportunities to southern communities, and have been studied and agreed upon by diverse interest groups including state agencies, federal agencies, and major tourism industry groups.

1. Denali Entrance Area and Road Corridor Development Plan

This plan, currently being implemented, includes a science/discovery center, interpretive nature trails, picnic areas, and additional campground sites.

2. South Denali Development Plan

Additional facilities for public recreation and tourism planned for the South Denali area include a new visitor center, interpretive pullouts, public use cabins, loop trails, and picnic areas.

- South side development will provide a more convenient park experience for residents of the Anchorage municipality. Closer proximity to developments in the southern region of the park will also provide the opportunity for school and other groups to visit and experience the park. North Access via rail is speculated to be an expensive and a confining experience. The proposed development located farther north into Alaska's Interior fundamentally fails to address the needs of the state's larger population centers.

### **North Access is a Controversial Project**

- If built, the North Access Route will be the single largest development in the National Park System. A major national taxpayers group (Taxpayers for Common Sense) lists a Second Access Road to Denali as one of the 10 worst road projects in America. Conservation groups are opposed. The National Park Service is opposed. Furthermore, the possible transfer of responsibility to the Denali Borough, a local government which has no road powers, is particularly problematic. Building a 90-mile road or railroad into one of the most famous national parks in the world, will generate considerable scrutiny and likely become a source of major problems for the state.

### **Preferred Action**

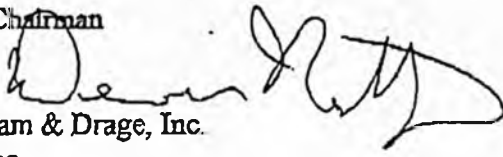
Senate Bill 3, which requests \$264,000 to study north access into Denali National Park and Preserve, should be denied. This project would be wasting state revenue that could be put to better use, better alternatives exist for expanding tourism opportunities and economic growth, and the state will be subjecting itself to a highly controversial and troublesome project.

*Susan Schrader*

Susan Schrader, Conservation Advocate

February 8, 2001

Memo To: Senate Transportation Committee  
Sen. John Cowdery, Chairman

From: Dennis Nottingham   
Peratrovich, Nottingham & Drage, Inc.  
1506 West 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Regarding Senate Bill No. 3 relating to appropriation for state matching funds for Denali Park Northern Access federal funding, please pass this important legislation.

Right-of-way reservation for future park access is important to the public in general and specifically tourists.





*Citizens' Advisory Commission  
on Federal Areas*

December 7, 1995

3700 Airport Way  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-4811  
(907) 451-2775  
Fax: 461-2761

Mr. Joseph N. Fields III  
Chairman & President  
Kantishna Holdings Inc.  
P.O. Box 71047  
Fairbanks, AK 99707

Dear Mr. Fields:

This letter serves as formal notification of the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas endorsement of the Kantishna Holdings, Inc. proposed Denali Railway System Project. At its November 15, 1995 meeting in Anchorage, the Commission voted unanimously to endorse the proposed railway project. In addition to specifically supporting the proposed Denali Railway System, the motion adopted by the Commission also expressed support for the general concept of a northern access route into Denali National Park & Preserve.

In recent years it has become clear that the growing visitor demand for access to Denali National Park & Preserve cannot be met by the existing park road and associated facilities. The latest effort to meet this increasing demand by providing visitor facilities and interpretive sites outside park boundaries as proposed in the Denali Southside Development Concept Plan will no doubt relieve some of the pressure. However, the Commission believes that demand for visitor access to the park itself will continue to exceed the capacity of the road by an ever increasing margin. The Denali Railway System proposal, by providing an alternative means to travel into Wonder Lake, as well as a range of visitor facilities, would serve to meet much of the increasing visitor demand.

It is our understanding that the proposed railway system also would provide year round access for private property owners within the park. The Commission is familiar with numerous past problems experienced by park inholders in attempting to secure access to their properties by way of the existing park road. We have always fully supported the rights of private property owners to adequate and feasible access to their property "for economic and other purposes," guaranteed by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

The Commission is also aware of the opposition to development of tourism facilities on private properties within the Kantishna area of the park. Much of this opposition is based upon concerns about the ability of the existing park road to meet the increased traffic levels which

Heinrich Springer  
PO Box 232114  
Anchorage, AK 99523 USA

TEL. 001-907-346-2121  
FAX " " " 1932

---

7. Febr. 2001

To  
The Senate Transportation Committee  
Senator John Cowdery, Chm.  
Juneau, Ak. via FAX 1-907-465-2069

Subject: SB No. 3, Northern Denali Nat. Park access, appropriation.

Dear Senator Cowdery and committee members:

Thank you for a chance to comment on this bill. Unfortunately I am unable to participate in the teleconference at 1:30 PM tomorrow, therefore please accept this letter for your records.

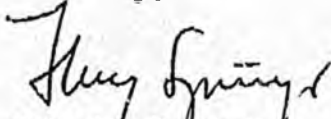
I have worked on this matter during last year and am in full support of this bill.

Congress included over 1 Million dollars in the FHWA budget under "High Priority Funding". This appropriation requires a match fund from other than federal sources.

This is a worthwhile project and long overdue and it is hard to understand why the appropriation has been sitting there un-used for so long, when it is considered a "high priority". This money, administered by the Denali Borough under aTORA agreement, can be used to get the necessary preparatory activities under way. This could include the project evaluation, EIS statements, technical considerations, ROW investigation, geological consideration etc. Considering that tourism is considered one of the State's most important "clean" industries this project should go on "fast track".

I recommend a favorable action to secure the necessary matching funds from State sources and designate the project as "high priority".

Sincerely,

  
Heinrich Springer

# CORRECTION

THE FOLLOWING DOCUMENT(S)  
HAVE BEEN REFILMED TO  
ASSURE LEGIBILITY OR PAGINATION



Central Microfilm Services  
Department of Education & Early Development  
State of Alaska



Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas

December 7, 1995

3700 Airport Way Fairbanks, Alaska 99709-4811 (907) 451-2775 Fax: 451-2751

Mr. Joseph N. Fields III
Chairman & President
Kantishna Holdings Inc.
P.O. Box 71047
Fairbanks, AK 99707

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It is our understanding that the proposed railway system also would provide year round access for private property owners within the park. The Commission is familiar with numerous past problems experienced by park inholders in attempting to secure access to their properties by way of the existing park road. We have always fully supported the rights of private property owners to adequate and feasible access to their property "for economic and other purposes," as guaranteed by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA).

The Commission is also aware of the opposition to development of tourism facilities on private properties within the Kantishna area of the park. Much of this opposition is based upon concerns about the ability of the existing park road to meet the increased traffic levels which

Vertical stamp on the right margin: This is a copy of the original document. It is not to be used for any other purpose.

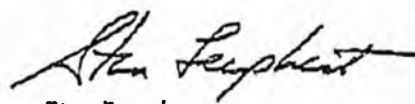
Mr. Joseph N. Fields III  
December 7, 1995

2

would occur as a result of private property development and still provide the same wildlife viewing opportunities that currently exist. With proper design and management, an alternative transportation method such as the proposed Denali Railway System would provide increased opportunities for park visitors and inholders, with minimal threats to the outstanding wildlife resources within Denali National Park & Preserve.

For your information, I will be making a brief presentation at the Denali Stakeholders meeting on December 12 to advise that group of the Commission's endorsement of this proposal. On behalf of the Citizens' Advisory Commission on Federal Areas, I want to wish you luck in pursuing this project. Please keep us advised of its progress.

Sincerely,



Stan Leaphart  
Executive Director

cc: Gov. Tony Knowles  
Sen. Ted Stevens  
Sen. Frank Murkowski  
Cong. Don Young  
Sec. Bruce Babbitt- DOI  
Supt. Steve Martin- Denali NP&P

Heinrich Springer  
PO Box 232114  
Anchorage, AK 99523 USA

Te1. 001-907-346-2121  
FAX " " " 1932

7. Febr. 2001

To  
The Senate Transportation Committee  
Senator John Cowdery, Chm.  
Juneau, Ak.

via FAX 1-907-465-2069

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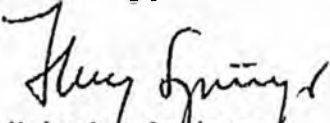
I have worked on this matter during last year and am in full support of this bill.

Congress included over 1 Million dollars in the FHWA budget under "High Priority Funding". This appropriation requires a match fund from other than federal sources.

This is a worthwhile project and long overdue and it is hard to understand why the appropriation has been sitting there un-used for so long, when it is considered a "high priority". This money, administered by the Denali Borough under a TORA agreement, can be used to get the necessary preperatory activities under way. This could include the project evaluation, EIS statements, technical considerations, ROW investigation, geological consideration etc. Considering that tourism is considered one of the State's most important "clean" industries this project should go on "fast track".

I recommend a favorable action to secure the necessary matching funds from State sources and designate the project as "high priority".

Sincerely,

  
Heinrich Springer

SENT BY:

15-94 : 4:21PM ;KOMATSU/RANGEL.

202 208 7888:# 3/ 3

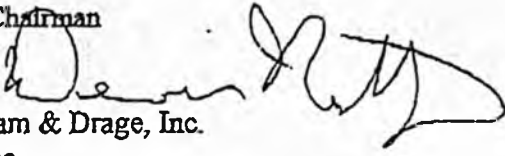
**NATIONAL PARK SYSTEM ADVISORY BOARD  
SPECIAL CALLED MEETING  
DENALI NATIONAL PARK TASK FORCE COMMITTEE REPORT  
RESOLUTION No. ///**  
December 14, 1994  
Page 2

development in the immediate Wonder Lake area.

**DONE, this Fourteenth Day of December, Nineteen Hundred and Ninety Four, here in  
Washington, DC.**

February 8, 2001

Memo To: Senate Transportation Committee  
Sen. John Cowdery, Chairman

From: Dennis Nottingham   
Peratrovich, Nottingham & Drage, Inc.  
1506 West 36<sup>th</sup> Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Regarding Senate Bill No. 3 relating to appropriation for state matching funds for Denali Park Northern Access federal funding, please pass this important legislation.

Right-of-way reservation for future park access is important to the public in general and specifically tourists.



# Alaska State Legislature

SENATOR  
**GENE THERRIAULT**

Mailing Address:  
119 N. Cushman, Suite 101  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 488-0857  
Fax: (907) 488-4271



Senate

While in session  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska  
99801-1182  
(907) 465-4797  
Fax: (907) 465-3884

Senate District Q

**Senate Bill 3**      **"An Act making a special appropriation for studies for the northern access into Denali National Park and Preserve; and providing for an effective date."**

**Sponsor:      Senator Gene Therriault**

## **Sponsor Statement**

---

Senate Bill 3 appropriates \$330,000 from the general fund to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for an environmental analysis and other necessary studies for the northern access into Denali National Park and Preserve. The money is intended to match \$1.32 million allocated as High Priority Funds in the federal 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century—TEA-21. The Legislature has previously passed two resolutions: HJR 28 in 1994 supported increased access near Mt. McKinley through establishment of a visitor activity area at Kantishna, and SJR 25 in 1997 supported enhancement of visitor access through development of a northern railroad route. Despite those resolutions and the fact that the federal government categorized the project in its High Priority funds, the Statewide Transportation Improvement Program does not include matching money until 2002. While recognizing that appropriations are usually considered in the context of a larger spending measure, I introduced SB 3 at the urging of Senator Frank Murkowski to generate discussion and highlight the need for this important project.

A northern access route would both increase the number of visitors, currently restricted by vehicle capacity limits, and expand the shoulder and winter tourist seasons. The concept of a northern access route has been endorsed by the National Park System Advisory Board (Resolution 12/14/94); the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce; the Fairbanks North Star Borough; the Anchorage Municipal Assembly; the City of Nenana; the Anchorage Star of the North Chamber of Commerce; the City of Seward; the Alaska Visitor's Association; the Anchorage Convention and Visitor's Bureau; and the Associated General Contractors of Alaska, among others.

# Alaska State Legislature

SENATOR  
GENE THERRIAULT

Mailing Address:  
119 N. Cushman, Suite 101  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 488-0857  
Fax: (907) 488-4271



Senate

While in session  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska  
99801-1182  
(907) 465-4797  
Fax: (907) 465-3884  
Senate District Q

## Request for Hearing

To: Senator John Cowdery  
Chairman, Senate Transportation Committee

Subject: Senate Bill 3

Sponsor: Senator Gene Therriault

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Gene T.", written over the printed name of the sponsor.

Date: February 1, 2001

---

I would like to respectfully request a hearing of Senate Bill 3, "An Act making a special appropriation for studies for the northern access into Denali National Park and Preserve; and providing for an effective date."

Senate Bill 3 appropriates \$330,000 from the general fund to the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities for an environmental analysis and other necessary studies for the northern access into Denali National Park and Preserve. The money is intended to match \$1.32 million allocated as High Priority Funds in the federal 1998 Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century—TEA-21.

Per your memo of January 12, 2001, attached to this request are:

- Sponsor statement
- Resolutions of support

I would like to request a teleconference be set up with the Denali Borough.

# Alaska State Legislature

SENATOR  
GENE THERRIAULT

Mailing Address:  
119 N. Cushman, Suite 101  
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701  
(907) 488-0857  
Fax: (907) 488-4271



Senate

While in session  
State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska  
99801-1182  
(907) 465-4797  
Fax: (907) 465-3884

Senate District Q

## Request for Off-Net Sites

**To:** Senator John Cowdery  
Chairman, Senate Transportation Committee

**Subject:** SB 3 "An Act making a special appropriation for studies for the northern access into Denali National Park and Preserve; and providing for an effective date."

**Sponsor:** Senator Gene Therriault *Wf for Gene Therriault* *gh*

**Date:** 2/5/2001

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I would like to request permission for two off-net sites for the purposes of allowing testimony by two people who are out of the state of Alaska. I would like to request off-net sites for:

- Jim O'Toole, Staff to the United States Senator Frank Murkowski, phone number 202-224-5161.
- Honorable John Gonzales, Mayor of the Denali Borough. Mayor Gonzales will be participating from Tucson, AZ. His local number is 907-683-1330.

Introduced by: John Immel  
Date: April 22nd, 1996

**RESOLUTION NO. 3652**

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING KANTISHNA HOLDINGS INC.'S PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A NORTHERN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE AND FOR THE BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY SYSTEM TO SERVICE DENALI NATIONAL PARK.**

**WHEREAS, Denali National Park (Denali) is the top visitor destination in Alaska and critical element in the Alaska visitor/tourism industry and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and**

**WHEREAS, the existing park road in Denali is at it carrying capacity and is creating adverse impacts on the environment, management problems for the National Park Service, a bottleneck in the visitor/tourism delivery system of Alaska, and access problems for park inholders; and**

**WHEREAS, no new road access to the interior of Denali is being proposed by the State or Federal governments; and**

**WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14th, 1994 resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new northern railroad route to Wonder Lake; and**

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FAIRBANKS CITY COUNCIL encourages the Secretary of the Interior to request the National Park Service to act upon the proposal of Kantishna Holding Inc. and create the railroad right-**

of-way; and that the Fairbanks City Council also encourages the Governor of the State of Alaska and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.

PASSED and APPROVED THIS 22ND DAY OF APRIL, 1996.

*James C. Hayes*  
JAMES C. HAYES, Mayor

AYES:  
NAYES:  
ABSTAIN:  
ABSENT:  
ADOPTED:

APPROVED AS TO FORM:

*H. P. Kuss*  
HERBERT P. KUSS, City Attorney

ATTEST:

*Nancy L. DeLeon*  
NANCY L. DeLEON, CITY CLERK



Sponsored by: Bencardino

**CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA  
RESOLUTION NO. 96-053**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY  
OF SEWARD, ALASKA, IN SUPPORT OF KANTISHNA HOLDINGS,  
INC.'S PROPOSAL FOR THE CREATION OF A NORTHERN  
RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE AND FOR THE  
BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY SYSTEM TO SERVICE  
DENALI NATIONAL PARK**

**WHEREAS**, Denali National Park (Denali) is one of Alaska's most important visitor destinations and is a critical element in the Alaska Visitor/Tourism Industry, and access to Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, the existing park road servicing Denali is near its carrying capacity and is creating adverse impacts on the environment, management problems for the National Park Service, a bottleneck in the visitor/tourism delivery system of Alaska and access problems for park in-holders; and

**WHEREAS**, neither the state nor federal government has proposed a new road access to the interior of Denali; and

**WHEREAS**, on December 14, 1994, the National park System Advisory Board approved a resolution accepting the Denali Task Force Report and specifically endorsed the creation of a new northern railroad route to Wonder Lake; and

**WHEREAS**, Kantishna Holdings, Inc., has proposed the Denali Railway System to insure long term resource protection at Denali and to provide year-round access to the interior of Denali; and

**WHEREAS**, the proposed new railway system is an environmentally sound and sensible undertaking which will commit substantial private financial investment in permanent infrastructure in Alaska, creating hundreds of new jobs in Alaska's economy; and

**WHEREAS**, new infrastructures created by the Denali Railway System will enhance the City of Seward's visitor/tourism industry, and the creation of permanent jobs and other activity associated with the construction and operation of the Denali Railway System will benefit all of Alaska's railbelt communities;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA, that:**

CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA  
RESOLUTION NO. 96-053

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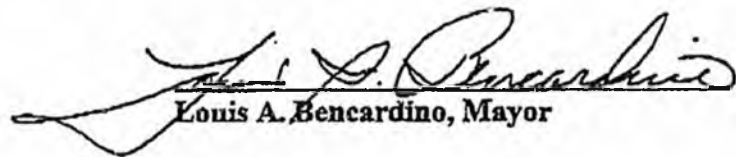
**Section 1.** The City of Seward endorses the creation of a new northern railroad right-of-way to Wonder Lake and the Denali Railway System as proposed by Kantishna Holdings, Inc.

**Section 2.** The City of Seward encourages the Secretary of the Interior to direct the National Park Service to act upon the proposal made by Kantishna Holdings, Inc., immediately and requests that Governor Knowles and the Alaska State Legislature give their full support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.

**Section 3.** This resolution shall take effect immediately upon its adoption.

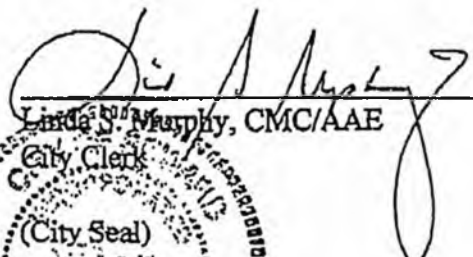

**PASSED AND APPROVED** by the City Council of the city of Seward, Alaska, this 22nd day of April, 1996.

THE CITY OF SEWARD, ALASKA

  
Louis A. Bencardino, Mayor

AYES: Anderson, Bencardino, Crane, Deeter, Keil, King, Sieminski  
NOES: None  
ABSENT: None  
ABSTAIN: None

ATTEST:

  
Linda S. Murphy, CMC/AAE  
City Clerk  
  
(City Seal)  
JUNE 1, 1916  
STATE OF ALASKA

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CLERK'S OFFICE

APPROVED

Date: 10-08-96

Submitted by: Assemblymembers WUERCH, BELL,  
Carlson, Kendall, Meyer, Von Gemmingen  
Prepared by: Assembly Policy and Budget  
For reading: October 8, 1996

**ANCHORAGE, ALASKA**

**AR NO. 96-274**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE ANCHORAGE MUNICIPAL ASSEMBLY ENDORSING THE  
CREATION OF A NORTHERN RAILROAD RIGHT-OF-WAY TO WONDER LAKE  
AND THE BUILDING OF THE DENALI RAILWAY SYSTEM;**

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is the premier visitor destination in Alaska and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure of the Park; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will create new year-round access from the North side of the Park to the Kantishna/Wonder Lake area; and

WHEREAS, no new road access into the interior of Denali is now being proposed by the State or Federal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will be privately funded and will not compete with the publicly funded Denali Southside Development Plan; and

WHEREAS, all of Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of the Denali Railway System, especially Alaska's "Railbelt" including the Municipality of Anchorage - The Gateway to Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14, 1994 Resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new modern railroad route to Wonder Lake.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Anchorage Municipal Assembly resolves:

Section 1: The Assembly endorses the development of the Denali Railway System and requests the Secretary of the Interior to create a railroad right-of-way suitable for such development within the Denali National Park and Preserve.

Section 2: That the Assembly encourages the Governor of Alaska, his Commissioners and staff, and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.

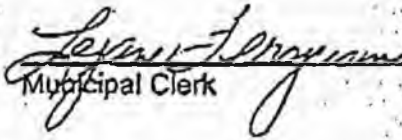
1 PASSED AND APPROVED by the Anchorage Municipal Assembly this  
2 8th day of October 1986

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Chair

9 ATTEST:

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Municipal Clerk

# GREATER \* FAIRBANKS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

250 Cushman St., Suite 2D, Fairbanks, AK 99701-4665  
phone: (907) 452-1105, fax: (907) 456-6968

e-mail: [ccstaff@mosquitonet.com](mailto:ccstaff@mosquitonet.com)  
website: [www.fairbankschamber.org](http://www.fairbankschamber.org)

Introduced By: Transportation Committee  
Date Introduced: September 25, 2000  
Date Passed: October 9, 2000  
Date Transmitted: October 9, 2000

## RESOLUTION 00-1009

### A RESOLUTION BY THE GREATER FAIRBANKS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SUPPORTING NORTHERN ACCESS TRANSPORTATION CORRIDOR ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (EIS) STUDIES FOR DENALI NATIONAL PARK AND PRESERVE

WHEREAS the United States Congress has allocated High Priority Funds in the Transportation Equity Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century - TEA21 - for the purpose of creating a new northern access corridor into Denali National Park and Preserve (the Park); and

WHEREAS vehicle capacity limits and the seasonal nature of the existing park road severely restricts the number of tourists who can travel into the Park, as well as, the expansion of the shoulder and winter visitor seasons in and around the Park; and

WHEREAS the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce ; the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce; the Alaska Legislature; the Denali, Fairbanks North Star and Mat-Su Boroughs and the Cities of Anchorage, Fairbanks, Nenana, North Pole and Seward have all endorsed by resolution the creation of a new northern railroad route into the Park; and

WHEREAS the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce recognizes State of Alaska legislation reserving portions of the said north access route for selection of a railroad right-of-way and authorizing bonding for the purposes of said right-of-way selection; and

WHEREAS Senator Frank H. Murkowski supports the expeditious use of said allocated TEA21 study fund:

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors supports the efforts of the Denali Borough to work with State and Federal transportation agencies and others, to utilize said TEA21 High Priority funds in the creation of a new northern access transportation corridor into the Park.



GREATER \* FAIRBANKS

# CHAMBER

OF COMMERCE


250 Cushman St., Suite 2D, Fairbanks, AK 99701-4665  
phone: (907) 452-1105, fax: (907) 456-6968

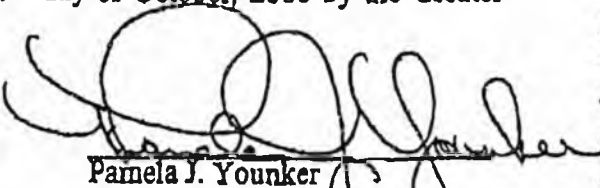
e-mail: [ccstaff@mosquiconet.com](mailto:ccstaff@mosquiconet.com)  
website: [www.fairbankchamber.org](http://www.fairbankchamber.org)

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution be distributed to:

- Senator Frank Murkowski
- Senator Ted Stevens
- Governor Tony Knowles
- Mayor Johnny Gonzales and Denali Borough Assembly
- Steve Martin, Superintendent, Denali National Park and Preserve
- Ralph Swarthout, AKDOT&PF
- Interior Delegation

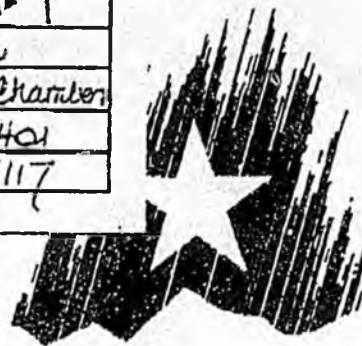
**PASSED** in Fairbanks, Alaska this 9<sup>th</sup> day of October, 2000 by the Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce.

  
 John Ringstad  
 Board Chair

  
 Pamela J. Younker  
 President/CEO



Post-it® Fax Note	7671	Date	1-16-01	# of pages	1
To	Wilda Rytman	From	Anne Marie		
Co./Dept.	Sen Gene Therrault	Co.	Anchorage Chamber		
Phone #		Phone #	272-2401		
Fax #	(907) 415-3884	Fax #	272-4117		



Anchorage - Star of the North  
Chamber of Commerce

**In Support of the Concept of Railway Access to  
Denali National Park  
Resolution 98-99-9**

**WHEREAS**, Denali National Park is a premier visitor destination in Alaska and access into the park is restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure; and

**WHEREAS**, a railway system will create new year-round access from the north side of the park to the Kantishna/Wonder Lake area; and

**WHEREAS**, no new road access into the interior of Denali National Park is under consideration by the State or Federal governments; and

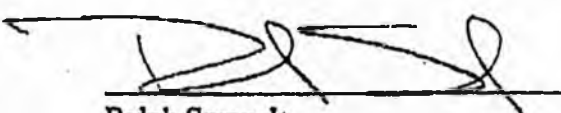
**WHEREAS**, a proposed privately funded railway system will not compete with the publicly-funded Denali Southside Development Plan; and

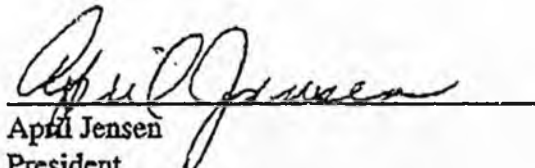
**WHEREAS**, Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of such a railway system, especially Alaska's "Railbelt," including the Municipality of Anchorage - The Gateway to Alaska.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Anchorage Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors resolves:

1. That the Chamber endorses the concept of the development of a railway system allowing access to Denali National Park.
2. That the Chamber encourages the State of Alaska and Federal Government to approve the right-of-ways necessary to create a privately funded railway system allowing better access to Denali National Park.

Approved this 19<sup>th</sup> day of February 1999.

  
Ralph Samuels  
1998-99 Chair

  
April Jensen  
President

## ACVB RESOLUTION

A Resolution of the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau  
in Endorsement of the Concept for  
Creation of a Northern Railroad Right-of-Way  
to Wonder Lake and the  
Building of the Denali Railway System



ANCHORAGE  
Convention &  
Visitors Bureau

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is the premier visitor destination in Alaska and access into Denali is extremely restricted due to the limited existing transportation infrastructure of the Park; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will create new year-round access from the north side of the Park to the Kantishna/Wonder Lake area; and

WHEREAS, no new road access into the interior of Denali is now being proposed by the State or Federal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Denali Railway System will be privately funded and will not compete with the publicly-funded Denali Southside Development Plan; and

WHEREAS, all of Alaska will be enhanced by the year-round operation of the Denali Railway System, especially Alaska's "Railbelt," including the Municipality of Anchorage - The Gateway to Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the National Park System Advisory Board's December 14, 1994 Resolution accepting the "Denali Task Force Report" specifically endorsed the creation of a new modern railroad route to Wonder Lake.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Anchorage Convention & Visitors Bureau Board of Directors on this 5th day of October, 1996, resolves:

1. ACVB endorses the concept of the development of the Denali Railway System, and requests the Secretary of the Interior to create a railroad right-of-way suitable for such development within the Denali National Park and Preserve.
2. ACVB encourages the Governor of Alaska, his Commissioners and staff, and the Alaska Legislature to give their fullest support to the creation of the Denali Railway System.
3. ACVB will continue to endorse this project based upon the current proposal, presented as the "Denali Railway System."

Max Lowe  
Chairman

Bill Elander  
President & CEO

524 W. Fourth Avenue  
Anchorage, Alaska  
99501-2212

907-276-4118  
Fax 907-278-5659  
email:acvb@alaska.net

November 11, 1997

TO: The Interior Delegation

FROM: Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce

RE: 1998 Legislative Priorities

1. **Priority:** Northern Access to Denali National Park  
**Reason:** The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce is in support of a Denali National Park northern route access, so that tourism may continue to grow.
2. **Priority:** Geophysical Mapping  
**Reason:** Geophysical mapping enables the State of Alaska to learn where large deposits of ore occur.
3. **Priority:** Forest Products Industry  
**Reason:** The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce has long supported a strong and viable timber industry in the Interior for economic growth.
4. **Priority:** DOT Funding for the Northern Region  
**Reason:** The ADOT&PF's Northern Region portion of annual FHWA monies through ISTEA has dropped dramatically in recent years. We believe that the resulting concentration of expenditures within the Central Region is shortsighted. The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce supports the review and revamping of ADOT&PF's STIP project priority ranking system to better address the identification and development of road projects which provide or improve access to economic development sites: enabling revenue generation by industries such as mining, petroleum development, tourism, timber and fishing.
5. **Priority:** The Alaska Railroad  
**Reason:** The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce supports the maintenance and upgrade of existing lines and the possible expansion of the railroad to enhance economic development opportunities to include, but not limited to, the mining, oil, timber and tourism industries. The Greater Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce also urges the retention of the Alaska Railroad governance "as is", preserving distinct benefits of Alaska Railroad's independent Board of Directors and the existing non-governmental arm's length relationship with the State of Alaska.

*DRAFT*

#93-1

**A RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE KANTISHNA RAILROAD  
AND DENALI NATIONAL PARK ACCESS**

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is one of the top two visitor destinations in Alaska, and;

WHEREAS, the current limits on access into Denali National Park restrict many visitors from entering the park that would like to, and;

WHEREAS, no additional access to the interior of the park is included in the South Denali Concept Plan now under consideration, and;

WHEREAS, the National Park Service Denali Task Force Report recently released did not provide for any immediate increase in the capacity on the current north entrance road, and;

WHEREAS, the National Park Service Denali Task Force Report described the Kantishna Railroad concept as captivating, and;

WHEREAS, Denali National Park is a critical element to the Alaska visitor industry throughout the state, and;

WHEREAS, the Kantishna Group, Inc. has proposed an innovative and unique general purpose tourism railroad from the area of Lignite to the area of Kantishna to provide access to the growing number of visitors to Alaska.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Visitors Association Board of Directors strongly supports the Kantishna Group, Inc.'s efforts to construct and operate a general purpose tourism railroad into Denali National Park.

NOW THEREFORE ALSO BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Visitors Association Board of Directors strongly supports the State of Alaska in its study and development of other methods of access into the park which will enhance the Alaska Visitors Industry.

FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED that AVA supports and encourages the National Park Service in its efforts to create appropriate, environmentally sound means of access to the park to serve the people of the United States according to its mandate.

*Adopted by the AVA Board of Directors*

6.9.2.6



# ALASKA VISITORS ASSOCIATION

3201 C Street, Suite 403 • Anchorage, Alaska 99503

Tel: (907) 561-5733 • Fax: (907) 561-5727

1994-95

Executive Officers

President

John Binkley

Riverboat Discovery

Fairbanks, Alaska

1st Vice President

Dean Brown

Princess Tours

Seattle, Washington

2nd Vice President

Bob Engelbrecht

TEHSCO Helicopters

Juneau, Alaska

P Government Relations

John Utten

Sitka Tours

Sitka, Alaska

Treasurer

Jack Anderson

Holland America Line

Westport, Inc.

Seattle, Washington

Secretary

Laurie Herman

Nascom, Inc.

Anchorage, Alaska

Past President

Dennis Brandon

Westmark Hotels

Anchorage, Alaska

Board of Directors:

Bob Bertio

Southeast Stevedoring

Tom Bolger

Alaska Sightseeing

Cruse, Wren

Steve Cockrell

Quinn's Landing Hotel

Ken Dale

Inverell Hotel

Bill Elander

Anchorage CVB

Tom Garrett

Glacier Bay Lodge, Inc.

Larry Houle

Alaska Railroad

Jerry Jernigan

Tok RV Village, Inc.

Paul Landis

Era Aviation

Linda McLaughlin

Delta Air Lines

Gary Odia

Alaska Highway Cruises

Arne Oleson

Inverell Hotel

Brad Phillips

Phillips Cruises & Tours

Justin Ripley

Denali Park Resorts

Roger Silvi

New Directions Tours

Tom Tougas

Kenal Fjords Tours

Brad Walker

Alaska Airlines

Tina Worthen

Regency Cruises

Tina Lindgren

Executive Director

## Alaska Visitors Association Position on Denali National Park Visitor Access

May 1995

### INTRODUCTION

The visitor industry recognizes and supports a balance between accessibility, preservation of park resources and provisions for visitor enjoyment and resource interpretation. The Alaska Visitors Association is evaluating specific alternatives to visitor access into Denali National Park. Issues central to this evaluation include increasing visitor demand for park access and the need to protect the natural resource and the visitor experience.

In AVA's opinion, short-term and long-term solutions exist and should be implemented. Most critical in the short term is to address demand for access within the Park.

The 10-20 year needs of over one million Park visitors per year must also be addressed. This demand will come from both organized tour groups and independent highway and fly/drive visitors to Alaska. Several long-term solutions have been reviewed by AVA and merit further examination. These include, the Alder Point Tram, the Petersville Road extension and the north "Stampede Rail/Road" access.

### POSITIONS ON SHORT-TERM SOLUTIONS:

#### Extension of the Short Tour to Teklanika

AVA favors:

- Tour access to Teklanika for all Natural History Tour buses. The demand is expected to grow to about 110,000 passengers or about 2,500 buses by the year 2000, and maintain a 5% growth rate thereafter.
- Improvement or hardening of the road surface to Teklanika to mitigate the ongoing dust problem, create a more comfortable ride, and reduce maintenance.
- Ongoing use of the mountain viewing pullout at Primrose.
- Construction of loop trails, a visitor shelter and interpretive signs at Teklanika.

This tour would be offered at three general departure times a day. The average tour time would be 3-4 hours. Capacity would be a maximum of 52 passengers per bus on current equipment with additional capacity determined by new equipment in the future.

The extended Short Tour would create visitor acceptance as a substitute for the Tundra (Wilderness or Wildlife) Tour. The Tundra Tour, and the NPS buses that penetrate further into the Park are almost at capacity. By extending the Short Tour to Mile 30.1, visitors will have a sense of traveling substantially into the Park. The Park road is widened to this point, and hardening the surface of the road would accommodate higher density buses and less environmental impact. The road between Mile 13 and 30.3 has been widened to two lanes with the intent that it would be paved similarly to the first 13 miles. Surface hardening will ensure that the road shoulders are stronger to accommodate larger motorcoaches, and eliminate dust problems. The Tundra Tour would be marketed to multi-night stay visitors who want a more in-depth experience of the Park.

#### **Re-allocate professional photographer permits**

Currently, professional photographers are allowed up to 10 permits per day to take their private vehicles into the National Park. The NPS views one of their vehicles as having the same wildlife impact as one bus. We recommend reducing the professional photographer limit from 10 to 5 permits per day, and re-allocating five additional vehicles to the Tundra/Wildlife tour buses. This could be put into effect immediately. It does not divert from the Park Master Plan.

An increase of 5 bus tours per day would allow 550 more buses (26,000 additional passengers) per summer season. This is a 25% increase in concession tour capacity without additional impact.

AVA received verbal agreement from Alaska's congressional delegation and from the former Denali Park Superintendent (Russ Berry) on this proposal.

#### **Recommendations for road improvements**

AVA recommends several improvements to Denali Park Road. With respect to Segment 2 (Savage to Teklanika) we recommend reconditioning the existing foundation and a new surface treatment.

At a minimum, we recommend that the chronic dips and heaves in the roadway be excavated and replaced with quality materials, using geotextiles and insulation where permafrost is encountered. A structurally sound foundation is essential to reducing maintenance costs for the roadway. A quality surface treatment to protect the base and subgrade is also essential. We recommend something like a 6-inch crushed aggregate base with a 3% minimum crown, prime coat and sealed surface with a one-inch high float emulsion asphalt blended and crushed aggregate leveling course. Drainage improvements should also be made, including replacing and adding culverts where necessary and elevating the road prism in low-lying areas.

We also support safety improvement recommendations along other segments of the Denali Park Road as outlined in Table 1: Summary of Recommendations (Route 10), on page vii of the Road System Evaluation study for Denali National Park & Preserve, April 1994.

## **POSITION ON LONG-TERM SOLUTIONS:**

Long-term solutions have been reviewed by AVA and those listed below merit further consideration. We understand NPS is currently examining the Tokositna site. We would like to work with NPS in determining the feasibility of the Petersville-Tokositna area for a variety of visitor activities.

### **Petersville Road/Tokositna Glacier Alternative**

This alternative calls for an improved and extended Petersville Road to Tokositna Glacier site at Long Creek. This site is considered by some as the best view corridor of Mt. McKinley. Tokositna Valley and surrounding foothills contain important habitat areas for several species of wildlife, including bear, wolf and swan.

### **Alder Point Tram Alternative**

AVA recommends further study of the 2-stage Aerial Tramway at Alder Point extending from the south end of Denali State Park several miles toward, and into, Denali National Park. The Tram would travel from the George Parks Highway over the Chulitna riverbed with potential views of bears and other wildlife. Passengers would change trams at midpoint, then continue to a high viewing platform on Alder Point overlooking Ruth Glacier and a spectacular view corridor toward Mt. McKinley.

The Alder Point Tram Alternative addresses several important objectives:

- Provides a second gateway into Denali National Park.
- Increases capacity into Denali National Park to satisfy unfulfilled demand.
- Protects wildlife and natural environment through a controlled access design and aerial pathway.
- Connects the National Park to the region's main transportation artery - the George Parks Highway.
- Satisfies three primary visitor motivators to the region: entry into Denali National Park, good views of Mt. McKinley, and opportunities to view wildlife.
- Meets the special needs of disabled and older Park visitors.
- Relieves traffic pressure on Denali Park Road.
- Can be included in existing tour itineraries without difficulty.

### **Stampede Rail/Road Alternative**

This alternative calls for construction of a new highway or rail from the Healy area into Kantishna and allow for development of a resort. Developing a loop consisting of the Denali road and the new Stampede road could double the number of passengers traveling the current road without an increase in traffic along the Denali Park Road. It would also solve legal access and traffic problems if an RV Park or other facility at Kantishna demands visitor access in excess of current levels.

## APPENDIX A

### **Background on Denali National Park Access**

Denali National Park is one of the main visitor attractions in Alaska. The number of annual visitors is limited by the park's capacity to accommodate vehicle access. There is pent-up demand for more access into the Park. The park's capacity is regulated by a General Management Plan and the capacity of the transportation systems that serve the Park. Main attractions of the National Park are wildlife and scenery. Wildlife is protected by a designated Wildlife Conservation Area located in the southern portion of the Park. The key scenic attractions in the Park are Mount McKinley and the Alaska Range.

The visitor industry sees three important motivators for visitors entering Denali National Park: a) to physically be within the Park; b) to view Mt. McKinley and c) to view free-ranging wildlife.

It is an industry-known fact that visitors want to visit Denali National Park in addition to viewing Mount McKinley and seeing wildlife. Denali National Park is a part of their national legacy which they wish to experience personally. The average age of Denali region visitors is 52 years, with 30% over the age of 65. Many visitors are not physically capable of enjoying foot trail access into the Park.

Denali's popularity and its present limited capacity to accommodate more daily visitors makes it one of the "bottlenecks" to visitor growth in Alaska. This frustrates an industry that wishes to satisfy the strong visitor demand to the Park. The desire to increase the capacity of Denali has led to many planning studies probing alternate access routes and transportation systems. They include: the Alternative Transportation Study into Denali National Park (NPS); the North Denali Road Study (State DOT/PPF); the Denali Concept Plan (NPS); and the South Denali State Park Planning (State DNR).

### **Current Park Access**

Denali Park Road stretches from its junction with Mile 237 of the George Parks Highway some 93 miles to the mining area of Kantishna. The road, completed in 1938, is paved from mile 0.0 at George Parks Highway to mile 13.1 at Savage River. In the 1960s the road, gravel-surfaced beyond mile 13.1, was widened to meet current road width standards to mile 31.3 at Teklanika River. Beyond Teklanika, the road is narrow, twisting, and in many places, less than two lanes wide.

The road is open to private vehicles for the first 13 miles. Road travel beyond Savage River (mile 13.1) is by permit only during the main visitor season. For 3 days, beginning with the second Friday after Labor Day, 300 permits are issued per day by a lottery system for travel the length of the road. In early spring and late fall, the road is open to Mile 30.3 at Teklanika.

### **Commercial Photographer Permits**

Up to 10 permits per day are issued to commercial photographers. An average of 2 passengers per photo permit during the 120-day season accommodates 2,400 persons.

**ARAMARK Tour Permits**

ARAMARK Leisure Services, Inc. dba Denali Park Resorts is authorized by concession contract to operate tour buses on the park road. They operate the (short) Natural History Tour to mile 17.5 up to 30 times a day, not to exceed 3 departures per half hour. They also operate the Denali Tundra & Wildlife Tour to mile 60.6 at Stony Dome (2,089 trips per season, with a per trip capacity of 52 persons for a total passenger capacity of 108,628, from May 26 to September 13); and the Visitor Transportation System (VTS) under a fixed schedule determined by NPS with a maximum seasonal capacity of 3,394 bus trips. Given an average of 30 passengers per bus trip the VTS estimated capacity is approximately 101,820 passengers.

## APPENDIX B

### Visitor Demand for Alaska and Denali National Park

Adventure travel and Ecotourism hold great promise for the travel industry in general, and for Alaska in particular. The use of federal lands and state parks is going up. A majority of Americans prefer a naturalist vacation; 54% of the population took naturalist trips within the last 12 months. Collectively, the travel industry experienced 15% growth in adventure travel/ecotourism during 1995 (source: ATMC marketing plan).

A sizable increase in the number of vacationing households can be projected through the turn of the century (1995-2000). All householders – up 13.6%. Domestic vacationers – up 15%. Domestic vacationers who travel by plane – up 15%. (Source: data by Mediamark Research, Inc., projections by American Demographics.)

A rapidly aging population is building the size of Alaska's target market at a phenomenal rate. Between 1990 and 2010, the number of people aged 50-plus will increase by 56% (source: American Demographics, April 1994).

More than half of all visitors to Alaska (57%) travel as independent travelers (among these travelers, approximately one-third purchase some sightseeing while in Alaska). The remaining 44 percent travel on some type of package tour. (Source: Alaska Visitors Statistics Program (AVSP))

The vast majority – 83.9% – of visitors to Alaska are U.S. citizens (source: AVSP).

Of summer visitors (when Denali Park is open), 36% – or 301,200 – visited the Denali Park or its gateway, McKinley. On a 7-point scale, those who visited Denali/McKinley rated their overall trip a 6.2; and compared to expectations, a 5.8; and in terms of value for money, a 5.3 (source: AVSP Patterns Opinions and Planning).

Tourism in Alaska will continue to see growth of 5.5% per year in the Summer, and a 3% increase per year in Fall, Winter Spring to the year 2000, based on the growth curves of the Alaska visitor industry since 1985. This would translate into a Denali/McKinley visitor count of 450,000 if the 36% Denali National Park visitation rate of all Alaska's visitors held steady.