

**SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD GRANTS "ALASKA RAILROAD'S" PROPOSED
CONSTRUCTION & OPERATION OF 80-MI. RAIL EXTENSION TO DELTA JUNCTION,
ALASKA**

The Surface Transportation Board announced today that it has granted the request of the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC, a state-owned railroad) to construct and operate a new, 80-mile railroad line—the Northern Rail Extension—in the State of Alaska, subject to extensive environmental-mitigation conditions.

After considering the entire public record before it, including both the transportation aspects of ARRC's proposal and potential environmental issues, the Board was satisfied that the proposed line would provide reliable, year-round freight and passenger service to the region south of North Pole, AK; access to training areas used by the United States military; and an alternative to the Richardson Highway, now the sole means for surface transportation of commercial freight in the proposed project area. The Board was also satisfied that the proposal would foster development of Alaska's economy by expanding ARRC's passenger and freight network to an area currently without rail service.

Today's action follows the Board's analysis of the September 18, 2009 Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) issued by the agency's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) concerning ARRC's proposal. SEA was assisted by several state and Federal agencies, and considered the numerous comments from the public during the environmental-review process. The FEIS reflected SEA's careful comparison of potential alternatives to the proposal to identify environmentally preferred rail alignment alternatives, as well as conditions to avoid, minimize, or mitigate potential environmental impacts. The Board was satisfied that the preferred rail alignment alternatives it authorized, along with the environmental conditions the Board imposed, would avoid, minimize, or mitigate, to the extent practicable, potential environmental impacts.

The full text of the Board's decision in [Alaska Railroad Corporation—Construction and Operation Exemption—Rail Line Between North Pole and Delta Junction, AK, STB Finance Docket No. 34658](#), can be found on the Board's Web site, www.stb.dot.gov.

###