



**ALASKA RAILROAD CORPORATION
CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF DIRECTORS
TELEPHONE: (907) 265-2403
FACSIMILE: (907) 265-2312**

December 17, 2010

Bonne' Woldstad
P.O. Box 56702
North Pole, Alaska 99705

Dear Ms. Woldstad:

You have asked the Alaska Railroad Corporation (ARRC) Board of Directors to support your efforts to obtain legislation that would direct disposal of certain railroad right-of-way on the railroad's Eielson Branch. It is your desire to see railroad right-of-way conveyed to adjoining landowners if and when the ARRC relocates its rail operations to a different location. While relocation is not imminent, ARRC has for many years conducted studies and other activities preliminary to such an effort and recently received \$1 million in federal funds through FMATS to complete the required environmental assessment. This is a very positive step, but the schedule for moving the railroad remains uncertain due to lack of construction funding (more than \$50 million is needed).

In the past, you have provided considerable testimony to the Board regarding your family's property at approximate Milepost 15 of the Eielson Branch. You believe the repeal of the reversion provisions of the Alaska Railroad Transfer Act had an adverse effect on your land interest. This section provided for reversion of railroad right-of-way to adjacent landowners in the event the land ceased being used for transportation, communication, or transmission purposes. In 2000, ARRC had asked the Alaska Congressional delegation for help in light of title questions arising from our first rail realignments near Anchorage and Seward, as well as a couple of spur line locations that had been unused since transfer in 1985. The simplest solution was to repeal that language, and the repeal became effective on February 20, 2003.

We understand that you and your family were not aware of the repeal until 2006 when ARRC proposed to close the Ruby Crossing at MP 15.17 and you were researching all the pertinent legal and historical arguments related to a closure. Since then, you and other family members have met or talked with ARRC staff numerous times about your concerns.

Both you and the Board have heard many times from railroad staff that the Eielson Branch was not a focus when the reversion repeal was sought. I can assure you it was not a factor for the Board during that effort. ARRC's General Counsel has taken the position that the legal effect, if any, of the repeal on the underlying title claims of

Ms. Bonne' Woldstad
December 17, 2010
Page 2 of 2

landowners along the Eielson Branch is not ripe for decision. Unless and until the right-of-way ceases to be used by the State for transportation, communication, or transmission purposes (which is broader than railroad purposes), the ARRC believes no vested claims would have been affected. However, we are not opposed to waiving a statute of limitations defense, so as to preserve any claim you currently have from this point forward if your legislative efforts are not successful. Our attorneys are still researching how this might be accomplished.

Equally important, I'd like to assure you that ARRC has no interest in retaining portions of the Eielson Branch right-of-way if rail operations are relocated elsewhere. ARRC is not the final decision-maker on use of this corridor because it is a State asset, not just a railroad one, under both the current law and the now-repealed reversion. Without other directions being given, we would turn jurisdiction of any vacated right-of-way over to the State. However, we will be happy to participate in any discussions with state officials on the subject. Further, we will not oppose your efforts to obtain a simple legislative direction regarding any future Eielson Branch relocation. Given that relocation is still many years down the road, there should be ample time for legislative and administration officials to fashion a fair and reasonable outcome.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John", written in a cursive style.

John Binkley, Chairman