



November 8, 2021

Secretary Debra Haaland
United States Department of the Interior
1849 C St NW
Washington DC 20240
Sent via email

Dear Secretary Haaland:

The collective organizations Alaska Chamber, Alaska Miners Association, Alaska Support Industry Alliance, Council of Alaska Producers, and Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc., write to express support of the Ambler Access Project (AAP).

In July 2020, a Joint Record of Decision (JROD) was issued by the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service approving the right-of-way and moving the project forward.

In September 2021, the United States Department of Justice requested a 60-day stay of the two related lawsuits challenging the JROD, and the United States Department of the Interior requested additional time to consult with the tribal and environmental organizations behind the two lawsuits. Unfortunately, the Stay Motion was granted on October 27 2022.

The AAP Project has completed several years of our nation's federal permitting process. In particular, the project was contemplated under a specific section of the Alaska National Interest Lands and Conservation Act (ANILCA) throughout a process that was specifically set out by President Barack Obama's Interior Secretary Sally Jewell, continued under the prior administration, and is now being represented in court by the Biden Administration. This Environmental Impact Statement process included dozens of public meetings and formal comment periods in which all stakeholders, including relevant tribal organizations, provided ample feedback about the project.

For a new Administration to pause a project that a Final Environmental Impact Statement determined could be done safely and followed National Environmental Policy Act public participation requirements is inappropriate. Extensive stakeholder engagement has already taken place, and government to government consultations can, and often do, occur while litigation is ongoing.

We are concerned that this transparent, public process has pivoted to behind the scenes negotiations

between DOJ/DOI and a limited number of tribes and environmental organizations, and could result in settlements outside of the judicial process. This will impact the legal, cultural and moral rights of many Alaskans associated with the Ambler Access Project and Ambler Mining district projects. In addition, it will deprive the opportunity for extensive socioeconomic benefits to the region and state, even though our federal process has already deliberated the merits of the project, which passed muster.

We urge DOI to act to return to the legal proceedings and receive a judicial ruling on the case(s), and throughout that process, defend its work and decision on AAP.

Thank you for your consideration of this matter.


Sincerely,



Kati Capozzi, President
Alaska Chamber



Deantha Crockett, Executive Director
Alaska Miners Association



Rebecca Logan, President and CEO
Alaska Support Industry Alliance



Karen Matthias, Executive Director
Council of Alaska Producers



Marleanna Hall, Executive Director
Resource Development Council for Alaska, Inc.

Cc:

Senator Lisa Murkowski
Senator Dan Sullivan
Congressman Don Young
Governor Mike Dunleavy