



## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **AIDEA Urges Biden Administration to Follow Federal Law for Access to State Lands and Minerals**

April 16, 2024 (Anchorage, Alaska) – The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA), strongly urges the Department of Interior to comply with federal law and the promises made at statehood to allow access to state lands and minerals for the Ambler Access Road Project. Recent media reports indicate the Department of Interior (DOI) plans to block access to the Ambler Mining District. This would violate several federal laws and promises made at statehood to allow development of state lands.

Our democratic system of government contains checks and balances of power among the three branches of government. The Executive Branch is supposed to administer the laws set by Congress, not circumvent them for political purposes. If DOI issues a “No Action” decision, it would violate:

- The Statehood Act of 1958, where Congress promised Alaska title to 103 million acres of land, the minerals in the land, and rights of access to develop and remove those minerals to fund critical services such as education.
- There are nearly 600,000 acres of state lands with active mining claims that the Ambler Access Road would serve. Congress did not intend for a federal agency to arbitrarily deprive the state of the value of those jobs and minerals for political gain.
- The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980. Section 201(b) explicitly states that the Secretary “shall” grant access from the Dalton Highway to the Ambler mining district.

**Governor Dunleavy** has expressed strong criticism regarding the consequences of such a decision, "Announcing the denial of the Ambler Road adds insult to injury. It shows just how out of touch the Biden administration is with Alaska. This potential decision not only contradicts the law but blatantly ignores the stringent environmental stewardship we uphold in Alaska. To hinder access to our responsibly managed resources and then force America to import minerals from countries with questionable environmental practices is not just ironic—it's irresponsible and unacceptable."

The Ambler Access Project, a private, industrial-controlled access road, is pivotal for accessing critical minerals necessary for America's clean energy future. The development promises significant economic benefits, including over \$1.3 billion in tax and royalty revenues and the creation of approximately 14,000 jobs, vital for the well-being of Alaskan communities.

"Allakaket wants a future of jobs and economic opportunities for our people; a legacy and future for our kids. We deserve the same opportunities as the billion-dollar donors and conservation groups trying to lock us into a state of poverty with the highest food and energy prices in the nation. Without access to running water or sewer, how are we supposed to be healthy people? Projects like the Ambler Road help us to develop skills and secure jobs that empower our people, much like Trans-Alaska Pipeline did in the 1970s," said **PJ Simon, First Chief of Allakaket**.

AIDEA urges the Department of the Interior to follow the law and the promises made to Alaska at statehood. The Federal government does not have the right to stop AIDEA from accomplishing its mission to create jobs and economic development.

"Denying access to the Ambler Mining District, which adheres to stringent environmental standards, would ironically force our nation to send jobs overseas, rely on critical minerals from China and countries with little or no environmental protections, while impoverishing local Alaska Native communities near the road," stated **Randy Ruaro, Executive Director of AIDEA**.

For information about AIDEA or any of AIDEA's projects, please visit [www.aidea.org](http://www.aidea.org) or contact AIDEA at [communications@aidea.org](mailto:communications@aidea.org).

#### **About AIDEA:**

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is a public corporation of the State of Alaska. AIDEA's purpose is to promote, develop, and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of Alaska.

#### **About Ambler Access Project:**

The Ambler Access Project is a proposed 211-mile, private, industrial-controlled access road to reach the Ambler Mining District in the Northwest Arctic Borough. The district is a large prospective copper and zinc mineral belt with extensive deposits of critical minerals and other elements essential for a green economy and military effectiveness. AAP was modeled after a similar AIDEA-funded industrial access road project located in the Northwest Arctic Borough, the DeLong Mountain Transportation System or Red Dog Road, in support of Red Dog Mine where environmental conditions were improved due to the project.

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