



PRESS RELEASE

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AIDEA Objects to Biden Administration NEPA Process and Illegal Blockade of State Lands, Minerals, and Federally Patented Mining Claims in Ambler Mining District

April 19, 2024 (Anchorage, Alaska) – The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) strongly objects to both the process used by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to reach a “No Build” decision and the effect of the decision which illegally blocks access to statehood lands, minerals, and federally patented mining claims.

Federal agencies are not supposed to include biased non-government employees in an objective open and transparent decision process. Yet, the BLM held closed-door meetings with former leaders of environmental groups and opponents of the project while locking out AIDEA, a State of Alaska corporation, and imposing a gag order on the State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources who participated in the BLM meetings

BLM’s decision is contrary to federal law and the promises made at statehood to Alaska:

- In 1958, because of prior abuse by federal agencies to lock up 90% of Alaska lands, Congress gave Alaska unique statehood rights. This included title to 103 million acres of land, the minerals in the land, the right to decide whether resources would be developed, and rights of access. Congress agreed to give these rights to Alaska to fund critical state services such as education, housing, energy, and medical services.
- The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) Section 201(b) expressly mandates the Secretary of Interior (“shall”) to grant access from the Dalton Highway to the Ambler mining district.
- ANILCA Section 1110(b) expressly mandates the Secretary of Interior (“shall”) to grant the State and private landowners reasonable and economically feasible access to those lands.
- Federal law under the 1872 Mining Act also requires the federal government to give reasonable and economically feasible access to federally patented mining claims, such as the ones that exist in the Ambler District.

The BLM’s “No Build” decision represents another illegal and direct assault on Alaska and its statehood property rights. It impacts rural villages and tribes that support the project, private property rights, and national defense.

PJ Simon, First Chief of Allakaket, said, "Without jobs, training, or development, my people are on the verge of disappearing into the twilight of history. The Ambler Road has given our town hope. Salmon runs have been very low in recent years, and caribou are scarce in our area. We need this road to feed our families and allow for more affordable goods to be transported to our community, as well as to provide jobs and investment for our village. I want to see my young tribal members out in the forest hunting and fishing while earning a paycheck. This will keep our culture strong in a changing world. I am very disappointed to hear that the government won't approve this road. Government officials need to better understand the struggles of our community and allow us to develop our resources responsibly."

"The Ambler Access Project, a private, industrial-controlled access road, is pivotal for accessing critical minerals necessary for America's national defense and clean energy future. By blocking this project, the federal government is forcing Alaska and the nation to depend on China for these critical minerals. China treats critical minerals the way OPEC controls the supply of oil, having recently imposed limits on the amounts allowed for export to the United States and other countries ([China curbs graphite exports in latest critical minerals squeeze | Reuters](#)). Depending on foreign sources of critical minerals is dangerous and Alaska needs the jobs and revenue from development to support ourselves," said **Randy Ruaro, AIDEA Executive Director**.

For information about AIDEA or any of AIDEA's projects, please visit www.aidea.org or contact AIDEA at 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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