



PRESS RELEASE

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AIDEA Statement on Bureau of Land Management Suspension for Ambler Access Project Right-of-Way on Federal Land

(Anchorage) – Friday, March 11, 2022, the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) suspended its 50-year right-of-way (ROW) with the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) for its 132,000-foot long portion of federal land for the future construction of the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Road. The proposed route for the controlled industrial access road crosses lands belonging to multiple federal agencies, the State of Alaska, and multiple private Alaska Native landowners.

The ROW was granted in 2021 in accordance with the Joint Record of Decision issued by the Department of the Interior (DOI) and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers following an exhaustive seven-year review process initiated under the Obama Administration. In the ROW suspension notice, the DOI determined that the BLM did not appropriately evaluate the effects on subsistence uses and did not adequately consult with Tribes prior to executing the project's programmatic agreement.

The notice, however, does not identify any specific deficiencies or corrective action plan. The notice also fails to acknowledge the comprehensive engagement and consultation with key stakeholders throughout the process. As documented in the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS), the BLM engaged in extensive outreach nearly quadrupling the required scoping period to allow additional time for public input.

More specifically, this included:

- An initial scoping period that was extended from 90 days to more than 330 days along with 15 BLM-hosted public hearings in 13 communities receiving more than 7,200 written comments.
- A draft EIS released in August 2019 that resulted in an additional 18 hearings in rural communities, hearings in Anchorage and Fairbanks, and a hearing in Washington, D.C. resulting in receipt of an additional 29,000 written comments.
- BLM sent letters to more than 50 federally recognized tribal groups, including those along the proposed road corridor.
 - Following up on these communications, the BLM held:
 - 15 government-to-government consultation meetings,
 - 11 Section 106 consultation meetings, and
 - 8 other stakeholder consultation meetings.

Access to and from the Ambler Mining District for resource development is guaranteed in Section 201(4) of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). The unique legislation established 10 new federal parks, preserves, and monuments throughout Alaska while guaranteeing certain rights of access for subsistence, hunting, fishing, recreation, and other economic and social purposes. Irrespective of the guaranteed access agreed under ANILCA, the federal government is unfortunately continuing to sow confusion over only managing 51 miles or 24% of the 211-mile road route. "The federal

government does not have jurisdiction on state and private lands within the State of Alaska,” said **AIDEA Board Chair Dana Pruhs.**”

The Ambler Mining District is a large prospective copper-zinc mineral belt with extensive deposits of critical minerals and other elements essential for our nation’s military effectiveness, renewable energy technology, and tech-focused economy. The district is estimated to create more than 3,900 total jobs (direct, indirect, and induced) and over \$300 million in annual wages once the mines are operational adding significant new revenues for both local and state governments. These opportunities are threatened when the federal government arbitrarily obstructs and delays the advancement of a permitted project.

In addition to jeopardizing the direct employment and economic benefits for Alaska Native and rural Alaska communities, current geopolitical events are showcasing the need for America’s energy and natural resource independence. “Suspending our right-of-way is a major setback for Alaska and the nation in accessing domestic and reliable supplies of the critical and strategic minerals so essential to our nation’s transition to clean and advanced technologies. The more our federal government prevents access to these minerals in Alaska, the more we remain reliant on supply chains from sanctioned nations,” said **AIDEA CEO Alan Weitzner.**

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is a public corporation of the state. AIDEA’s purpose is to promote, develop and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of Alaska. Since 1967, AIDEA has been responsible for directing more than \$3.5 billion in economic development in Alaska and has declared \$446 million in dividends to Alaska since 1997.

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