

STATE OF ALASKA

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

NORTHERN REGION, PRECONSTRUCTION

2301 PEGER ROAD
FAIRBANKS, ALASKA 99709-5399
TELEPHONE: (907) 451-2243
TDD: (907) 451-2363
FAX: (907) 451-5103

November 20, 2008

RE: Jim River Maintenance Station
Building
Project No. 51520
Agency Scoping Letter

To Whom It May Concern:

We are seeking comments on a proposal to construct a new maintenance building at the Jim River Maintenance and Operations (M&O) station at approximately Milepost (MP) 138 of the Dalton Highway (Figure 1). The station consists of an existing M&O building along with other storage units, living quarters, and support areas and access road, all situated on a large gravel pad surrounded by mostly undeveloped land. The project would be funded by the State of Alaska. The level of environmental document expected is a State Projects Environmental Checklist.

Project Background

The site of the DOT&PF Jim River M&O station was once a hill used as a material source for construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. After the hill was leveled, DOT&PF leased the property from BLM and (in 1978) constructed the existing maintenance building.

The areas under consideration for the site of the replacement maintenance building are shown on Figure 2 (Areas A and B). Area A is covered in gravel and currently used for storing gravel materials, driving, and parking. Area B is the former housing site for pipeline workers. Some vegetation has established itself in Area B.

Surrounding Land Uses

Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s (Alyeska) pump station (PS) 5 is across the highway and up a hill from the State M&O station. The Prospect landing strip is on the other side of PS 5. The Dalton Highway and a material source are adjacent to the station. The material source is up on a hill and was previously used as a solid waste disposal site by Alyeska. Next spring Alyeska plans to build an oil spill contingency site on the Jim River, northwest of the M&O station (Figure 2).

Purpose and Need

The purpose of this project is to provide a long lasting, structurally sound building for storage and maintenance of road maintenance equipment. The existing shop facility is near the end of its useful lifespan and has the following deficiencies:

- 1) Compromised foundation due to differential settlement from permafrost soils
- 2) Questionable load-bearing capacity of roof trusses
- 3) Difficulty in maintaining building and its utility systems

Within the first 10 years of the building's construction it was retrofitted to address the differential settlement by attempting to preserve the thermal integrity of the underlying permafrost soils. In

addition, the roof structure has been modified to account for design deficiencies. However, the building still experiences seasonal movement and the roof's load-bearing capacity is still in question.

The movement of the building also makes the facility difficult to maintain. As the building stretches and moves, conduits and piping are at risk of failure. The movement causes openings in the walls, ceiling, and floors which compromise the thermal envelope of the building. In addition, the man doors and overhead doors require seasonal adjustment to maintain proper alignment as the building foundation shifts.

Proposed Project Description

A new building would be constructed in a different location on the existing pad. The replacement building would be approximately the same size as the existing building. Existing utilities would be utilized, and demand is not expected to increase. The existing building would be demolished at a later date.

Material Site

The proposed material site is approximately 7 miles north of the station on the Dalton Highway (shown on location map, Figure 1). The site is actively used by DOT&PF and Alyeska Pipeline Service Co. The identification numbers for the material site are: 92-3.1 (Alyeska), 65-9-045-2 (DOT&PF), and F-72900 (BLM). Work at this site is expected to be confined to the existing disturbed area.

Preliminary Research Results

Preliminary research results on environmental resources in the project area are described in Appendix A. A project website has been set up at www.pdcprojects.info to provide project information and allow you to comment.

In addition to identifying any concerns and/or issues your agency might have with the proposed project, the links on the project website request agency-specific information. The website will take you to a list of questions specific to your agency's purview and allow you to provide comments via email.

Your comments will assist us in evaluating possible impacts related to the project. To ensure that all factors are considered in the State Projects Environmental Checklist, **please send your comments by December 19, 2008**. If you have questions regarding the project, you may contact me by telephone at 907-451-2238 or send email to bruce.campbell@alaska.gov.

Jim River Maintenance Station Building
Agency Scoping Letter
November 20, 2008
Page 3

Thank you for your assistance with this project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "B. Campbell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each name being capitalized and prominent.

Bruce Campbell
Northern Region Environmental Coordinator

Attachments: Figure 1 – Location and Vicinity Map
Figure 2 – Project Area
Appendix A