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Commissioner



Department of
Natural Resources

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STATE OF ALASKA

PRESS RELEASE

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DNR extends comment period on Ambler Road easement application

Public can now submit comments through April 1

(Fairbanks, AK) – The Alaska Department of Natural Resources' Division of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) has extended the public comment period on an easement application from the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) to build a 211-mile road to Ambler. The new deadline for public comment is 5 p.m. on Friday, April 1.

The proposed road would be a private industrial access road intended to facilitate mine development and transportation of ore as part of the Amber Access Project (AAP). AIDEA is seeking a 450-foot-wide exclusive easement over approximately 125 miles of state-owned lands. Once construction of the road is complete, the final width of the easement would be 250 feet, consistent with federal rights-of-way.

Beginning at milepost 161 of the Dalton Highway, the road would extend west 211 miles to the Ambler Mining District. The road would cross lands owned and/or managed by federal, state, municipal and private entities. AIDEA is proposing to begin construction in 2025.

Though Federal agencies had already issued rights-of-way for the road on federally managed lands, last week the Biden administration announced that it will seek to supplement the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project. The Department of Justice, on behalf of the Interior Department, filed the documents on Feb. 22 in an on-going federal court case asking an Alaska District Court judge to allow the agency to revisit the analysis associated with the EIS because DOI has concerns that the subsistence needs of Alaska Native tribes were not fully considered. The Interior Department also said it intends to suspend the already issued Federal rights-of-way for the road during the review.

The road would not be open to the public and access would be controlled by a permitting system administered by AIDEA. The road would initially be constructed as a one-lane road with seasonal access in the fall and winter but not during the spring and early summer when portions of the road are soft and susceptible to damage from traffic.

Additional details, including a summary of the application, maps of the road alignment, application materials, the draft Site Specific Land Use Plan, and links to the federal documents are available at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/ambler-road/>. The division is also seeking comments on the draft Site Specific Land Use Plan.

The public can comment at <https://dnr.alaska.gov/mlw/ambler-road/> or by sending comments to 3700 Airport Way, Fairbanks, AK 99709 on or before 5:00 p.m. on April 1.

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