

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 11

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FIRST LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Introduced: 4/5/19

Referred: Transportation

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the United States Secretary of State to issue a Presidential permit authorizing a**
2 **railroad crossing of the Alaska-Canada border from state land into Yukon, Canada;**
3 **and supporting cooperation between the United States and Canada to establish a public-**
4 **private partnership for construction of a railroad from Alberta, Canada, to the state**
5 **that would connect the Alaska Railroad to the North American railroad system.**

6 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

7 **WHEREAS**, in 1914, the United States Congress passed legislation authorizing
8 construction of up to 1,000 miles of railroad in the Territory of Alaska to connect coastal and
9 interior regions of the territory and support mineral and agricultural development, freight and
10 passenger service, and military operations, yet little more than 500 miles of the Alaska
11 Railroad have been built under both federal and state governments; and

12 **WHEREAS**, in 2004, the Twenty-Third Alaska State Legislature authorized the
13 Alaska Railroad Corporation, under AS 42.40.460(a), to "delineate a proposed transportation
14 corridor between the existing railroad utility corridor of the Alaska Railroad and the border of
15 Alaska and Canada," which would be approximately 250 miles, and, under AS 42.40.465(a),

1 to "investigate extension of the Alaska Railroad from the border of Alaska and Canada to
2 connect with the North American railroad system," which would be approximately 1,200
3 additional miles; and

4 **WHEREAS** previous state studies, private estimates, and a 2016 Van Horne Institute
5 study financed by the government of Alberta, Canada, indicate that a railroad connecting
6 Alberta to the state could attract enough traffic to be economically viable despite capital costs
7 estimated at over \$17,000,000,000; and

8 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Railroad Corporation could enter into public-private
9 partnerships to support financing, construction, and operation of a railroad connecting the
10 Alaska Railroad to the North American railroad system; and

11 **WHEREAS** the state would not be required to provide funding for a railroad project
12 connecting Alberta, Canada, to the state; and

13 **WHEREAS**, in 1968, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Executive Order 11423, as
14 amended, requiring a Presidential permit to be granted before infrastructure connecting the
15 United States with a foreign country is constructed and operated; and

16 **WHEREAS** Presidential permission to construct and operate a railroad from Alberta,
17 Canada, to the state, with the cooperation of the Alaska Railroad Corporation, is sought to
18 reduce regulatory risk and to facilitate raising the necessary global risk capital for the
19 engineering, permitting, construction, and operation of a railroad from Alberta to the state;
20 and

21 **WHEREAS** the United States and the state have long enjoyed and relied on peaceful
22 cooperation with Canada with respect to the railroad over White Pass, from Skagway into
23 Yukon, Canada, and roads connecting the state to Canada and the contiguous United States,
24 including the Taylor Highway, the Alaska Highway, the Haines Highway, the South Klondike
25 Highway, and the Cassiar Highway; and

26 **WHEREAS** Indigenous peoples in Canada, Alaska Natives, and residents of
27 communities along the route of the proposed railroad connecting Alberta, Canada, to the state
28 would have the opportunity to be involved, to comment on the project, and to understand the
29 purpose and location of the route; and

30 **WHEREAS** some of the state's Pacific ports could contribute to faster and more
31 efficient shipping of goods in and out of North America if a railroad connecting Alberta,

1 Canada, to the state were constructed; and

2 **WHEREAS** a railroad connecting Alberta, Canada, to the state would further the
3 security and global competitive economic positions of the United States and Canada and
4 enable new economic opportunities for the state and Yukon, British Columbia, and Alberta,
5 Canada;

6 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
7 Secretary of State to issue a Presidential permit allowing a railroad crossing of the Alaska-
8 Canada border from state land into Yukon, Canada; and be it

9 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
10 Secretary of State to issue a Presidential permit allowing a railroad connecting Alberta,
11 Canada, to the state as soon as practicable to reduce any regulatory risk for the project; and be
12 it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the highest safety
14 and environmental standards for the construction and operation of railroads connecting the
15 state to Canada; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports participation by
17 Indigenous peoples in Canada, Alaska Natives, and residents of communities along the route
18 of proposed railroads connecting the state to Canada in the development of the project; and be
19 it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature welcomes a public-private
21 partnership with the Alaska Railroad Corporation to facilitate global capital investment in the
22 development of a railroad connecting Alberta, Canada, to the state, and encourages
23 cooperation between the United States and Canada, specifically between the state, and Yukon,
24 British Columbia, and Alberta, Canada, to speed the development of the project; and be it

25 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature welcomes the
26 participation of global investors, state residents, Alaska Native corporations, state tribal
27 entities, and Indigenous peoples in Canada subject to each investor's due diligence, to help
28 develop a railroad connecting the state to Canada.

29 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President
30 of the United States; the Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada; the
31 Honorable Mike Pompeo, United States Secretary of State; the Honourable David

1 MacNaughton, Ambassador of Canada to the United States; the Honourable Chrystia
2 Freeland, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Canada; the Honourable Marc Garneau, Minister of
3 Transport, Canada; the Honourable Carolyn Bennett, Minister of Crown-Indigenous
4 Relations, Canada; the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, Minister of Intergovernmental and
5 Northern Affairs and Internal Trade, Canada; the Honorable Elaine L. Chao, United States
6 Secretary of Transportation; the Honorable Rick Perry, United States Secretary of Energy; the
7 Honorable Kirstjen Nielsen, United States Secretary of Homeland Security; the Honorable
8 Robert E. Lighthizer, United States Trade Representative; the Honorable David Bernhardt,
9 Acting United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Kyle K. Hipsley, Commissioner
10 for the United States, International Boundary Commission; the Honourable Jean Gagnon,
11 Commissioner for Canada, International Boundary Commission; the Honorable Ann D.
12 Begeman, Chair, United States Surface Transportation Board; the Honourable Scott Streiner,
13 Chief Executive Officer and Chair, Canadian Transportation Agency; the Honorable Kelly
14 Craft, United States Ambassador to Canada; the Honourable Larry Bagnell, Member of the
15 House of Commons of Canada representing Yukon; the Honourable Sandy Silver, Premier of
16 Yukon, Canada; the Honourable John Horgan, Premier of British Columbia, Canada; the
17 Honourable Rachel Notley, Premier of Alberta, Canada; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski
18 and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
19 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.