

Hughes Village Council

Hudotl'eekkaakk'e Tribe

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Resolution 22-04 -2022 A Resolution in support of the Ambler Access Project

WHEREAS, The Native Village of Hughes (referred to as the Tribe) is the governing body of the sovereign federally recognized tribe of the Athabascan and Inupiat people of Hughes located in the Doyon region in the State of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the mission of the Tribe is to value out subsistence way of life, our children and elders, and our healthy lifestyles. We will take direction from our elders through hands-on learning and story-telling. We are preparing our next generation to continue our work. We approach our-work with open minds and open hearts and the intention to build a community that is designed by its members to be a place safe from floods and reflective of our values and our lifestyles. We are continuously seeking a higher quality of life; and

WHEREAS, the subsistence way of life is core to the culture and identity of our people, and through subsistence harvest most of the households, use, receive and try to harvest subsistence resources such as moose, caribou, berries, fish; and

WHEREAS, the community of Hughes is not connected by road to any other community and receives all food, household goods, fuel, and other supplies by air and barge service which is not available every spring or summer; and

WHEREAS, subsistence activities require financial resources to participate in annual activities that support families and communities and the cost of home heating fuel and gasoline was \$9.00 per gallon in December of 2021; and

WHEREAS, economic development opportunities in the community are limited due to the remote rural nature of the area; and

WHEREAS, the potential of the Ambler Mining District to be developed led to the inclusion of the following Section 201(4)(b) in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 stating "(b) Congress finds that there is a need for access for surface transportation purposes across the Western (Kobuk River) unit of the Gates of the Arctic National Preserve (from the Ambler Mining District to the Alaska Pipeline Haul Road) and the Secretary shall permit such access in accordance with the provisions of this subsection" and the Alaska Pipeline Haul Road is now known as the Dalton Highway; and

WHEREAS, ANILCA Section 201(4)(d) states "The Secretary and the Secretary of Transportation shall jointly prepare an environmental and economic analysis solely for the purpose of determining the most desirable route for the right-of-way and terms and conditions which may be required for the issuance of that right-of-way"; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (ADOT) evaluated the potential for a private industrial road connecting the Ambler Mining District to the Dalton Highway by completing the Western Alaska Access Study in 2009 after engagement with all communities along the proposed access route; and

WHEREAS, after the completion of ADOT's study over 134 meetings and village engagements occurred to evaluate the potential for pursuing the next step in evaluating whether a road could be built connecting the Ambler Mining District to the Dalton Highway; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Industrial and Development and Export Authority applied for a permit to pursue the Ambler Mining District Industrial Access Project to the U.S. Department of Interior which led to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) acting as the lead agency to complete the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the project and the National Park Service (NPS) completed the Environmental and Economic Analysis (EEA) as required by ANILCA; and

WHEREAS, during the development of the EIS and the EEA, the BLM and NPS undertook robust engagement and consultation with communities in the Northwest Arctic Borough and Doyon region, specifically, the Tribe; and

WHEREAS, the BLM issued a Joint Record of Decision (JROD) based on the final EIS and EEA that established a programmatic agreement for what is now called the Ambler Access Project; and

WHEREAS, the JROD grants a right-of-way to AIDEA to continue the feasibility of the Ambler Access Project, but does not permit construction of the road and includes stipulations and conditions that must be met before a road can be considered under a construction plan including but not limited to:

- Establishment of a Subsistence Advisory Committee and a Tribal Liaison Program,
- AIDEA to submit documentation of consultation with affected subsistence communities to the BLM within 90 days of approving 90 percent road design at each phase of construction,
- Alaska Department of Conservation (ADEC) has the right to revoke its Certificate of Reasonable Assurance of compliance with state water quality standards (WQS) if there is no longer a reasonable assurance of compliance with WQS due to changes in circumstances, and
- The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers may revoke the permit for authorized work if AIDEA fails to implement and enforce the Programmatic Agreement; and

WHEREAS, the Tribe supports the JROD, the Programmatic Agreement for the Ambler Access Project, and has confidence in the process laid out for continued engagement with the Tribe and other communities along the proposed access route to ensure protections for subsistence activities and resources are in place throughout the Project; and

WHEREAS, the operations of the Red Dog Mine continue to be an example of responsible resource development that funds the operation of local government programs including schools, public safety, and infrastructure project; and

WHEREAS, the Red Dog Mine and the Delong Mountain Transportation System have operated for more than 40 years balancing subsistence and resource development while delivering jobs, economic opportunities, and a payment-in-lieu of taxes to the Northwest Arctic Borough that funds over 85 percent of their budget; and

WHEREAS, NANA and Doyon have not issued rights-of-way across their lands for the Ambler Access Project, essentially amounting to veto of the project if conditions laid out by these two Alaska Native Corporations are not met for a right-of-way; and

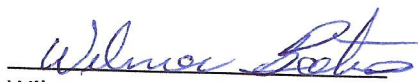
WHEREAS, the Tribe is willing to work with AIDEA and the Subsistence Advisory Committee to ensure that stipulations and conditions in the JROD that are there to protect subsistence and the environment are followed and ensure that if the Ambler Access Project is built and under operation, that is done right; and

WHEREAS, the Tribe sees the Ambler Access Project and the resulting road as an opportunity to address high rates of unemployment, support participation in subsistence activities, benefit tribal members and the community at large and reduce the high cost of living by providing an opportunity for commercial access via the road for fuel and other goods; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Tribe supports the Ambler Access Project and the completion of the project evaluation with the opportunity that the road presents to improve the quality of life of the people of the community and develop the local economy; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Tribe supports the Ambler Access Project, the process the JROD lays out for the Ambler Access Project and requests consultation with the U.S. Department of Interior to discuss the status of the Ambler Access Project JROD.

ADOPTED, March 4, 2022, at a duly called meeting held via (INSERT IF by teleconference), by a vote of 4 for, 0 against, and 0 not voting.


Wilmer Beetus, First Chief

 3/4/22
Angelia Ambrose, Secretary