

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
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## **SPONSOR STATEMENT FOR SB 31**

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*"An Act relating to a railroad utility corridor for extension of the Alaska Railroad to Canada and for the extension of the Alaska Railroad to connect with the North American Railroad system."*

**G**rowing Alaska's economy and ending a history of boom-and-bust cycles depends on improving our state's transportation infrastructure. The purpose of [SB 31](#) is to advance the inclusion of Alaska in the contiguous North American rail system.

Without appropriating funds, SB 31 authorizes the Alaska Railroad Corp. to delineate a transportation and utility corridor from its terminus at Eielson AFB to the Alaska-Canada border. After survey and full delineation is achieved, state land would be transferred to the railroad fee simple title.

SB 31 also authorizes and encourages the railroad to obtain ownership or a right of way through any other lands, whether federal or private. A separate section authorizes the railroad to investigate further extension in order to make a connection with the North American rail system, logically in British Columbia.

This legislation mandates a 500-foot wide corridor that could allow for other uses such as fiber optic cable or power transmission lines. In addition, the corridor allows for specific railroad-related uses such as sidings, depots and materials storage.

Completing this last transcontinental railroad will benefit the mining, agriculture, tourism, food processing and oil and gas sectors of Alaska's economy. For example, the corridor between Eielson AFB and the border with Canada bisects a proven range of rich mineral potential, including the Pogo Project near Delta Junction.

SB 31 allows the Alaska Railroad to use funds it can obtain – such as from federal appropriations or sale of bonds – to survey and obtain a right of way to the Canadian border.

As world trade grows, this rail connection can only increase Alaska's economic ties with the rest of the nation and North America as a whole.

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