



Alaska Conservation Alliance

Uniting for Alaska's Future

Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline Project Position Paper

The Alaska Conservation Alliance (ACA), an umbrella organization comprised of 40 member groups with a combined membership of 38,000 Alaskans, supports an environmentally appropriate natural gas pipeline project.

ACA believes that the United States and the world must actively pursue the development and integration of new energy sources that are clean and renewable in order to strengthen the US economy, reduce dependence of foreign sources of energy, and to reverse global climate change that is threatening our way of life. Alaska is in a unique position to help shape the energy future of the US while maintaining Alaska's prosperity. Integral to Alaska retaining its position as an energy state is the urgent need to begin developing and investing in renewable energy projects throughout Alaska; from geothermal in the Aleutians to wind in the Arctic. If pursued in a timely and vigorous manner ACA believes that Alaska has the potential to be a leader in this field similar to oil and gas whereby Alaskan technology and expertise is exported to other northern countries and regions.

Alaska's natural gas supplies are a valuable commodity for its citizens. While not a renewable energy source, natural gas is cleaner burning than other fossil fuels and can provide feedstock and financial capital to spur further innovation in renewable energy. Furthermore, the Prudhoe Bay field has an estimated 23 trillion cubic feet of gas, allowing gas reserves to be delivered to market while avoiding the controversies associated with gas development in frontier areas and on private land.

In order for the residents of Alaska to be fully engaged in this critical project, full disclosure and transparency is essential. A successful pipeline project will require full and open discussion among lawmakers and the Alaskan public, with a range of proposals and potential routes for the pipeline available for serious consideration. Only by comparing proposals and engaging the public can we select the best alternative for Alaska.

Building on the wisdom of Governor Hammond's criteria for supporting resource development projects and the recognition that a sound economy and a sound environment go hand in hand, ACA has developed five sets of principles and questions to guide our support for an Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline:

1. Minimize environmental impacts.
 - Does the project design avoid, minimize, and mitigate the environmental impacts of project infrastructure and activities?
 - Does the project protect subsistence resources and minimize impacts on local communities?
 - Will the gas line avoid frontier wilderness areas? (We do not support the "over-the-top" route offshore to the Mackenzie River Delta.)

- Does the project require Best Available Technology¹ and Best Management Practices²?
 - Are sufficient funds to be escrowed for Dismantling, Removal and Restoration (DR&R) of the natural gas pipeline project so that regulatory agencies can ensure that the corridor is restored to its original condition as facilities are taken out of service?
2. Protect Alaska's wild lands and the integrity of parks, refuges, critical habitats, preserves and conservation areas.
- Does the pipeline project -- including gas field sources--stay outside all established conservation areas, critical habitats, and other sensitive areas?
 - Does the proposal strive to develop Prudhoe Bay gas within the existing development area?
3. Provide maximum benefits to the citizens of Alaska.
- Will the State of Alaska receive an adequate share of revenues from the project?
 - Is the value of Alaska's renewable public trust resources such as water, fish, wildlife, etc. adequately protected?
 - Will there be a Project Labor Agreement (PLA) ensuring skilled workers receive fair wages and will Alaska Natives receive fair share of jobs?
 - Will there be Best Value Contracting³ for the construction and maintenance of the gas line?
 - Will the project deliver low cost gas to Alaska communities?
4. Provide incentives for development of clean and renewable sources of energy
- Are there mechanisms for increased research and development of hydrogen production, storage, and delivery technologies?
 - Are there mechanisms to invest natural gas revenue into development of renewable energy production?
5. Provide for full and open public participation, review and comment in all project stages from planning, construction, operation, and decommissioning.
- Has the public been engaged and fully informed regarding the project proposal and all terms and conditions associated with it?
 - Is the integrity of the public process maintained, including the right of Alaskans to pursue judicial recourse, citizen initiative, agency appeal and other avenues of public participation?
 - Will there be a full, continuing public process under NEPA review, with an up to date EIS?

¹ Best Available Technology is the most environmentally protective technology that is readily available without regard to traditional "cost-benefit" analysis.

² Best Management Practices is the policies, practices, or structures which prevent (as the primary option) or reduce (as the secondary option) pollution or other forms of environmental harm.

³ Best Value Contracting is a competitive contacting process which requires projects to be awarded to the contractor offering the best combination of price and qualifications.

- Will the true financial costs and risks be made known to all Alaskans prior to decisions being made?
- Will there be a role for a permanent, adequately funded, independent formal citizen's advisory board?
- Is there government to government consultation with Alaska's tribal governments in accordance with the executive order on environmental justice?

The Alaska Conservation Alliance and its member groups believe that any responsible development of North Slope natural gas resources must answer these key questions. Furthermore, these same principles should apply when considering and reviewing secondary impacts from pipeline construction. ACA believes it is possible to design a natural gas pipeline within these components and as such supports the efforts to pursue a natural gas pipeline from Prudhoe Bay. Recognizing that a natural gas pipeline has far-reaching implications for Alaska's economy and environment, ACA hopes that this paper lays the foundation for constructively engaging the conservation community in the planning, construction, and operation of this important project.

