

For Release
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STAGE ONE OF RAIL LINK STUDY NEARS COMPLETION

WHITEHORSE – With the dawn of a new year, the Alaska-Canada Rail Link Feasibility Study, underway for approximately six months, is advancing toward the results of its market and engineering assessments.

These assessments, referred to as Stage 1, comprise the first two parts of the study's four-part market, technical, financial and public interest analysis.

“The results of Stage 1 will cap the most comprehensive research of northern railway prospects since a 1942 U.S. Government survey conducted during the construction of the Alaska Highway,” said Project Manager Kells Boland. “From this grass-roots research, starting this spring in Stage 2 we will be able to address the critical question of financial feasibility along with public interest issues.”

The results of the market analysis will quantify the existing market for transportation from Alaska to northern B.C. through the Yukon; quantify potential future markets, including resource development, pipeline construction and passenger traffic; and estimate potential rail revenue from those markets.

The results of the technical analysis will assess the technical feasibility of building and operating a railway over various routes in Alaska, the Yukon and B.C.; research alternative modes of transportation and routes that are or could be available to shippers; and develop life-cycle costs for all of the alternatives.

“With its conclusion this coming summer, the completed study will provide sound economic and engineering information to build a ‘business case’ for investors,” continued Boland. “If the business case cannot support rail construction right away, the study will nevertheless provide a comprehensive body of knowledge to support future transportation planning in the north.”

Over one million dollars in contracts was awarded last fall for this first stage of the study. Approximately 45 per cent went to Yukon companies.

A joint initiative of the Yukon Government and the State of Alaska, the study is scheduled for completion in the summer of 2006.

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