

For Release:
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ALASKA-CANADA RAIL LINK AWARDS SECOND ROUND OF CONTRACTS

WHITEHORSE, YUKON – As Stage One of the Alaska-Canada Rail Link Feasibility Study approaches completion, three financial advisory contracts have been awarded to conduct the study's second stage Financial Analysis.

Macquarie North America, Ernst & Young Orenda and Partnerships B.C. submitted successful proposals to the public call for tenders and will collaborate on the three-part analysis.

“Undertaking a collaborative approach will ensure the Financial Feasibility Analysis meets its stringent completion deadline of June 2006,” said Project Manager Kells Boland. “Using these three particularly well-qualified firms will allow us to move in parallel through a comprehensive evaluation of private, public and alternative financing approaches.”

- Macquarie North America will evaluate private financing from its global experience in creative structuring of freight rail investment.
- Ernst and Young Orenda will apply its pioneering approaches to value for money measurement of public infrastructure financing.
- Partnerships BC will provide its unique public interest perspective in evaluating alternative financing combinations for railway investment.

“The results of the Stage One Technical and Market Analysis will be paired with the results of the Stage Two Financial Analysis to determine if a rail link is in fact a realistic and economically sound venture,” continued Boland.

“With its conclusion this summer, the completed study will provide a comprehensive body of information to build a ‘business case’ for investors. If the business case cannot be implemented immediately, the study results will continue to support well-informed decision making for ongoing multi-modal transportation planning in the north.”

A final component of the study involves an examination of land use issues, part of the study's public interest analysis. A public call for proposals will take place in April 2006 and information will be made available at www.alaskacanadarail.org.

Over one million dollars in contracts was awarded last fall for Stage One and 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 next summer.

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