

Canada-US Rail Advisory Committee

Terms of Reference

- Purpose:** Establish a single, effective and efficient process:
- a) To research the feasibility of a rail corridor through Canada to Alaska;
 - b) To achieve a project definition for the proposed Alaska-Canada Rail Link;
 - c) To foster future Canada/Alaska cooperation in trans-border corridor projects.

Context: International cooperation on current and potential investments in railway, pipeline, waterway and other linear infrastructure that crosses the Canadian border.
(Note: At the Federal Government level precedents include the joint U.S.-Canada St. Lawrence Seaway Navigation Project, the International Joint Commission to implement the Boundary Waters Treaty, the Transit Pipeline Treaty and Agreement on Principles for construction of a Northern Gas Pipeline.)

Members: Public and private sector stakeholders to be appointed from Yukon, British Columbia, Alaska, Canada and United States.

Funding: To be shared between Alaska and Yukon.

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The Canada-US Rail Advisory Committee is instructed to examine, report and provide recommendations to the sponsoring jurisdictions on the validity of an Alaska-Canada rail connection including the identification of issues that may require further consideration by respective jurisdictions. Subject matters shall include, but not be limited to operational, commercial development, environmental, technological, legal and regulatory. Feasibility study should address the following:

- Define feasibility in terms of long term social and economic benefits (public benefit) of connecting by rail Alaska, the Yukon and northern British Columbia to Canada and the Lower 48.
- Determine the technical and economic feasibility of the identified optimum rail corridor, based on likely construction and operation cost, potential freight and passenger revenues and unresolved technical or socioeconomic considerations.

- If initial evaluation indicates the project is not feasible, identify what factors or different combinations of factors would need to change in order for a rail connection to become feasible.

Specifically, the study shall:

1. Assess and compile existing documentation.
2. Study, assess the feasibility and report on construction and route considerations associated with a railway linking British Columbia and Alaska through the Yukon.
3. Forecast and report on the potential socio-economic growth and development of the areas to be served by the railway and assess the potential benefits and adverse impacts that a railway would have on the region.
4. Consider and report on the impact on existing transportation infrastructure that a railway linking British Columbia and Alaska may have.
5. Study and report on the potential environmental effects of a railway between Alaska and British Columbia and recommend the action governments may take to harmonize and streamline the planning and environmental assessment processes currently in effect in relevant jurisdictions.
6. Document existing government policies, programs and initiatives of respective jurisdictions that may be utilized to facilitate a potential private sector railway proposal.
7. Study such other matters as the management working group deems appropriate and relevant to their overall assessment of viability of an Alaska-Canada rail connection.

The advisory committee will develop a detailed work plan related to the fulfilment of the terms of reference to be provided in early July, 2005.

The advisory committee shall report no later than June 30, 2006.