

STATE OF ALASKA

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January 15, 2002

Superintendent
Denali National Park and Preserve
P.O. Box 9
Denali Park, Alaska 99755

The State of Alaska has reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) for Improvement of New Visitor Facilities in the Entrance Area of Denali National Park. The State appreciates this opportunity to review the EA. The comments in this letter represent the consolidated views of the State of Alaska agencies.

As a class 1 area, Denali must meet regional haze regulation requirements to protect visibility. In the discussion on air quality on page 30, the report states, "Though an incremental improvement is expected from a reduction in vehicle emissions from the use of less polluting fuels in park and concessionaire vehicles, the net effect would be small compared to the potential air quality effects from outside sources." This statement is vague on what is meant by "outside sources" and whether there is an actual net benefit from use of alternative fuels, when weighed with other sources, such as induced travel from private vehicles, employment or the 30% increase in train travel. The report also states that "Denali documents some of the nation's best air quality." on page 22. Because Denali starts with such low levels of pollution, even small increases can be viewed as proportionally large or when viewed in terms of percentage increase, so the best efforts to quantify impacts should be considered in this assessment.

In contrast to the other alternative, the preferred alternative would greatly benefit access to the visitor, science, and learning centers for the significant numbers of train riders visiting the park.

Please contact me at 907-269-7476 if you have any questions regarding these comments.

Sincerely,

Don Perrin
Project Review Coordinator

cc: Patrick Galvin, Director, Division of Governmental Coordination
Frank Rue, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game
Pat Pourchot, Commissioner, Department of Natural Resources
Joseph Perkins, Commissioner, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities
Michele Brown, Commissioner, Department of Environmental Conservation
Deborah Sedwick, Commissioner, Dept. of Community and Economic Development