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August 17, 1994

Russ Berry  
Superintendent  
Denali National Park and Preserve  
P.O. Box 9  
Denali Park, AK 99755

Dear Mr.  Berry:

The State of Alaska has reviewed the Environmental Assessment (EA) on the Proposed Construction of Visitor Transportation System Facilities for Denali National Park and Preserve. This letter represents the consolidated comments of the State's resource agencies.

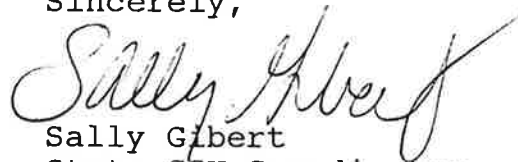
The State conceptually supports the proposals in the EA for bus support facilities and expanded employee housing. The State has been a particularly strong advocate of on-site employee housing for bus drivers. Nonetheless, the State is extremely concerned about the process that led to these proposals.

This EA was supposedly made available to provide the public with some meaningful input into decisions about bus facilities; yet those decisions were effectively made when the concession agreement was signed and before this EA was made available for comment. Any change at this point, such as selection of the No Action alternative, would radically alter the equations used in the concession contract in a way that would clearly not be in the National Park Service's or the public's best interest as it is presented in the EA. This is not a meaningful choice, and reduces this EA to a paper exercise of little value.

It appears that this EA has been provided merely as a token vehicle for public review - an action which circumvents the intent of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). The larger issues, of course, are embodied in the concession contract itself. The public was provided no opportunity to offer input on any aspect of this contract. The long term implications concerning the numbers of park visitors being accommodated, impacts on the roadbed, and the real costs to the NPS and to the public were not addressed in a public forum - and are still not fully understood.

The State is extremely disappointed with the contract development process and this EA's trivialized attempt at recovering, after the fact, some semblance of public involvement. At a minimum the National Park Service should learn from this mistake so that such misuse of the NEPA process is not perpetuated. More importantly, the NPS must no longer orchestrate major policy issues outside the scrutiny of the public.

Sincerely,

  
Sally Gilbert  
State CSU Coordinator

cc:

Molly Ross, Special Assistant to the Assistant Secretary  
for Fish and Wildlife and Parks

Joan Darnell, Chief, Environmental Quality, NPS

Carl Rosier, Commissioner, Department of Fish and Game

John Sandor, Commissioner, Department of Environmental  
Conservation

Michael Barton, Commissioner, Department of Transportation and  
Public Facilities

Richard Burton, Commissioner, Department of Public Safety

John Katz, Governor's Office, Washington, D.C.

**Distribution List**

**DENALI BUS EA**

**August 22, 1994**

Tina Cunning	Department of Fish & Game, Anchorage
Terry Haynes	Department of Fish & Game, Fairbanks
Pricilla Wohl	Department of Environmental Conservation, Anchorage
Joyce Beelman	Department of Environmental Conservation, Fairbanks
Ric Davidge	Department of Natural Resources, Anchorage
Norm Piispanen	Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities, Fairbanks
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Stan Leaphart	CACFA, Fairbanks