



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR MIKE DUNLEAVY

Department of Transportation and
Public Facilities

NORTHERN REGION
Design, Engineering, & Construction

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December 5, 2025

Bruce Sackinger
Alaska Department of Natural Resources
3700 Airport Way
Fairbanks, AK 99709

Re: Noatak Airport Relocation
Z61478000
Application Package

Dear Bruce:

The Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) is applying for permanent easements (Tract II-B & Tract III-B) as well as an extensive land use permit for a temporary winter haul route (TCEs 23 through 39 & 41) as part of a project to relocate the existing Noatak Airport. The purpose of the project is to mitigate the threat of loss of runway infrastructure due to river erosion.

The existing airport is located near the Noatak River, which has seen accelerated riverbank erosion towards the airport property in recent decades. Studies and analysis assessing Noatak riverbank erosion were conducted in 2003, 2013 and 2015 (Environmental Document, Appendix B) and concluded that Noatak riverbank erosion will continue for the foreseeable future. While exact erosion timelines are difficult to predict with accuracy, continued erosion is a virtual certainty. The continued erosion jeopardizes the existing airport and therefore also jeopardizes the Noatak community which relies on safe and reliable air transportation service.

Alternatives to improve the existing airport in the current location were considered but dismissed because river erosion will continue to threaten the entire airport. Further investment to maintain and repair existing airport infrastructure could be compromised, as the airport itself is threatened by the river erosion. Countering erosion with a revetment structure was not seen to be practicable due to the difficulty in sourcing material for such a structure (large aggregate or concrete in large quantities), concerns over long-term stability of such a structure, and the continued maintenance it would require.

The proposed location was chosen because it met criteria of not being subject to river erosion, not being within an area of thaw unstable permafrost, and minimizing the length of any access road thereby minimizing ground disturbance and maintenance costs. The Noatak Community Comprehensive Development Plan identifies relocating the airport as a high priority community development need.

- Permanent Easements (See enclosed Easement Location Exhibit)
 - Tract II-B consists of a water body within the airport boundary, particularly the runway protection zone (RPZ). Exclusive DOT&PF control of these lands will be necessary in order to meet FAA title requirements for airport sponsors.
 - Tract III-B consists of a small portion of the proposed airport access road where it crosses Kuchoruk Creek. A two lane single span bridge across the creek would be constructed as part of the project.
- Temporary Winter Haul Route (See enclosed LUP Plats and Legal Descriptions)
 - A winter route would be constructed to facilitate overland transportation. This would include the construction of snow roads and ice bridges to protect the tundra, lakes and streams. Equipment would use the existing Delong Mountain Transportation System (DMTS) and Port system to connect an overland access route to the Noatak project area via the temporary winter road. The DMTS and Port would be used for equipment, but not improved or expanded. No additional fill pads and facilities in wetlands or waters for a barge landing or equipment storage are required. The equipment for the construction would be offloaded at the DMTS Port during the summer.
 - The winter snow road would depart the DMTS haul road and travel 67.6 miles to Noatak. The proposed route minimizes stream crossings and would use ice bridge construction to cross five channels, including Kiyak Creek. The winter route, constructed of snow and ice only, requires no ground disturbance or permanent cut and fill on slopes and would be safe for proposed equipment travel. No permanent fill would be placed in wetlands or waters. The route would experience temporary vehicle traffic, and noise and air emissions typical of heavy machinery during use of the route.
 - The width of the requested permit area is intentionally variable to allow for location options during construction which would reduce any potential impacts to the natural environment and establish a reliable transportation route. The route will only occupy a portion of the overall permitted area. The changes in width of the proposed permit area represent the current certainty of the most appropriate location for the route. The majority of the route is expected to be 25' to 30' wide with some sections being as wide as 50' to allow for turnaround movements.

The Application for Easement and LUP Application are both enclosed. The permanent easements requested are located within:

- KRM, T25N, R19W, Section 18

Recent weather events have accelerated erosion concerns and it will be important to begin construction on the new airport property as soon as possible. The project is currently scheduled to begin during early winter 2026. In order to meet that goal we will need to have these applications processed and approved in the spring of 2026. DOT&PF requests that these applications be processed as quickly as possible in order to meet this admittedly ambitious construction goal. Please let me know if you need any additional information to review these applications or if there is anything that I can do to help expedite the process.

If you foresee any problems or have any questions, please contact me at 451-5468 or by email at dawn.decristo@alaska.gov.

Enclosed: DNR Application for Easement (Tract II-B & III-B)
DNR LUP Application (TCEs 23 through 39 & 41)
Project Environmental Document (CatEx)
Easement Location Exhibit
LUP Plats and Legal Descriptions
Temporary Winter Haul Route Overview
Tract II-B & Tract III-B Title Reports
TCEs 23 through 39 & 41 Title Reports
Kuchoruk Creek Report