



Alaska Railroad Corporation *News Release*

DATE: June 2, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Stephenie Wheeler, 265-2671 or cell 382-3327

Railroad issues statement regarding herbicide permit

*Non-chemical means of weed control are not enough;
Regulators continue to issue violations/fines*

ANCHORAGE, Alaska – The Alaska Railroad must control vegetation along the tracks for safety reasons. For 26 years, we have been trying to do this without herbicides. Federal rail safety regulators say that our efforts to date have not been adequate and we continue to be fined for numerous vegetation violations.

The Alaska Railroad needs to add herbicides as part of the effort to control unwanted vegetation. Our proposed herbicide program (as outlined in the permit application) is limited, and uses herbicides available to any Alaskan in products such as Roundup.

We support the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation process and the decision to grant a permit to the railroad. This process has taken over a year, and has involved extensive public meetings, scientific study and research. More information is available on the Alaska Railroad web site at www.alaskarailroad.com.

CUTLINES FOR PHOTOS TAKEN TODAY:

In 2009, the Federal Railroad Administration (FRA) issued 130 vegetation-related violations that are associated with fines of up to \$10,000 each. FRA inspectors returned to Alaska in late May 2010 and have already issued 20 violations for vegetation. It is still very early in the season and these photos are indicative of the vegetation growth along the area covered by the herbicide permit application.



Milepost98_(BelugaPt)_Violation.jpg – FRA regulators issued a violation for weeds growing between the ties. One of the FRA's areas of safety focus is to ensure that weeds do not prevent track inspectors from seeing the track in order to check for possible defects.



Potter Marsh_siding.jpg – FRA regulators issued a violation for vegetation along this area. Another area of FRA focus is to ensure that train crews and track maintenance employees can safely walk along the track. Herbicides would not be applied within 100 feet of a water body. This photo is only meant to illustrate weed growth and safety concerns.