

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**NORTHERN ALASKA ENVIRONMENTAL CENTER * THE WILDERNESS SOCIETY *
BROOKS RANGE COUNCIL**

Groups condemn Trump administration's continued attack on Alaska's Arctic

Federal agencies give the okay to the proposed Ambler road, allowing AIDEA to push the industrial boondoggle during a pandemic

Today the Bureau of Land Management, Army Corps of Engineers, and National Park Service gave the go-ahead to a state funded industrial gravel road that would benefit private mining interests and degrade the health of Arctic lands, waters, wildlife and communities. The proposed Ambler road would be funded by the Alaska Industrial and Development Export Authority, a public corporation of the State of Alaska, with no clear plan for reimbursement by mining companies.

The Record of Decision (ROD) is the final action by three federal agencies comes just weeks after AIDEA's board voted to move \$35 million to the project in an emergency meeting held under the guise of addressing the public health crisis caused by the coronavirus. The state has already spent over \$27 million on the project.

"The state's willingness to spend public funds on a private project that so clearly does not serve the public interest should be alarming to all Alaskans," **said Solaris Gillispie, Clean Water and Mining Manager at the Northern Alaska Environmental Center.** "As the communities in the region have stated again and again, the impacts to the region's water, food, and cultural sovereignty are unacceptable. Alaska's wealth is in our lands, waters, and people, and we will not allow the state to trade that wealth for multinational companies' profit."

BLM released the Final Environmental Impact Statement for the Ambler proposal in late March, well into the public health crisis. AIDEA in turn used the cover of the pandemic to move funds to the road project on March 27 despite near unanimous criticism. Dozens of Alaskans, including small business owners, hunters, healthcare workers and elders, [as well as Doyon Ltd.](#), condemned AIDEA's transfer of millions to the project.

Others have raised concerns about impacts on recreational activities and the economy that recreation helps support.

If built, maintaining the road would continue to require \$10 million annually in state funds, despite Alaska's ongoing fiscal uncertainties. The project may cost over \$1 billion, with no guarantee on return for the state's investment. South32, the Australian company that created a joint venture with Trilogy Metals of Canada earlier this year to form Ambler Metals, experienced major financial hits in recent months and has since borrowed back approximately 40 percent of the money it committed to the joint venture. Still, the state seems committed to another potential road to nowhere, throwing away money when Alaskans need support more than ever.

As state and federal agencies and the mining industry assert “business as usual” through this pandemic, Alaskans suffering the burden of the pandemic response have repeatedly demanded that the health and safety of communities and families be prioritized.

The agencies making this decision on the proposed Ambler road, as well as AIDEA, have failed to take into account local communities’ wishes and concerns, while risking the lands, waters and wildlife on which they depend for their ways of life.

See related press release from National Parks Conservation Association [here](#).

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