



PRESS RELEASE

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Biden Administration Decision on Ambler Access Road Violates Federal Laws and Harms Alaska's Future

June 28, 2024 (Anchorage, Alaska)—The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) condemns today's "No Build" decision by the Biden Administration. The decision attempts to deny access to hundreds of thousands of acres of already leased state mining claims and the Ambler mining district. The decision breaks several federal laws that give Alaska and its residents the right to develop state lands and create good-paying, family-supporting jobs.

PJ Simon, First Chief of Allakaket, said, "This decision shows a total lack of respect for tribes and our way of life. We need jobs, we need affordable gas, and we need the road. Blocking this access keeps us trapped in poverty and disregards the voices of those who support the project."

Fred Sun, First Chief of the Native Village of Shungnak, said, "Our people have supported this road because it brings hope and opportunity. Denying us access to our own land is not just a policy failure; it's an act of neglect. We deserve the chance to thrive, not just survive. The Ambler Road is a step toward a better future for us all."

When Congress passed the Alaska Statehood Act in 1957, it promised Alaska and its residents the right to develop state lands and minerals (Section 6(i)). In 1980, Congress was so concerned federal agencies would sabotage mining in the Ambler district that it included a mandatory access right "shall be granted" by the Secretary to the Ambler mining district from the Dalton Highway (Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) Section 201(4)). Today's action by the Biden Administration shows that it cannot be trusted to respect federal law, the State of Alaska, or Alaskan Tribes seeking a better future for members or Alaskans.

Ironically, today, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a decision in [Loper-Bright Enterprises v. Raimondo](#) overturning the *Chevron* doctrine, saying federal agencies do not have unbridled discretion in interpreting and applying laws such as this Ambler Road action.

The "No Build" decision isolates over 600,000 acres of state lands and minerals, along with federally approved and privately owned mining claims [\[map\]](#). The minerals on these claims are vital for renewable energy projects, electric vehicles, and essential defense weapons systems. Critical minerals are particularly important as China, which controls supply now,

recently passed laws allowing it to stop the supply of germanium, gallium, and high-quality graphite if it deems a country is not acting in the best interest of China. All these minerals are used in high-tech national defense systems.

The Biden Administration decision sentences Alaskan Tribes near the road and their members to grinding poverty with little hope for sustainable, family-wage jobs. In some areas, the price of gas used in subsistence hunting is as high as \$17 a gallon, if even available.

This short-sighted and politically motivated decision comes at a critical juncture. The region's largest employer, the Red Dog mine, faces diminishing ore supplies and potential closure in a few short years. The Ambler Road and associated mines could provide a lifeline, offering thousands of well-paying jobs for local residents and essential revenue for the Northwest Arctic Borough to support schools and other village needs. The road would also provide a medivac route and facilitate access to more affordable food and fuel for local communities.

Governor Mike Dunleavy said, "By breaking the law and denying access to these critical minerals, the Biden Administration is jeopardizing our national security and our ability to transition to renewable energy, along with the negative economic effects on Alaskans in the region. This is a clear case of putting political interests above all other issues. I urge AIDEA to fight for Alaska's future. The Chinese, Iranians, Venezuelans, and others will be thrilled to death again to learn that our own federal government is trying to put Alaska out of business. Our adversaries are laughing all the way to the bank."

"Alaskans have been sold out again by the Biden Administration for political gain. AIDEA will continue to work with local communities and Tribes to gather support for the project," said **Randy Ruaro, Executive Director of AIDEA**. "Alaskans were promised the right to develop our resources and create jobs and opportunities for Alaskans and support itself as a state. The revenue from mining would help support schools and other government needs as well as grow the Alaska Permanent Fund. AIDEA will fight against this violation of federal law. When federal laws are not followed, it is a threat to democracy."

For information about AIDEA or any of AIDEA's projects, please visit www.aidea.org or contact AIDEA at communications@aidea.org.

About AIDEA:

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is a public corporation of the State of Alaska. AIDEA's purpose is to promote, develop, and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of Alaska.

About Ambler Access Project:

The Ambler Access Project is a proposed 211-mile, private, industrial-controlled access road to reach the Ambler Mining District in the Northwest Arctic Borough. The district is a large prospective copper and zinc mineral belt with extensive deposits of critical minerals and other elements essential for a green economy and military effectiveness.

AAP was modeled after a similar AIDEA-funded industrial access road project located in the Northwest Arctic Borough, the DeLong Mountain Transportation System or Red Dog Road, in support of Red Dog Mine, where environmental conditions were improved due to the project.

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