



DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

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When President Nixon on November 16 signed into law the Alaska Pipeline Act, that action automatically increased the Department of Transportation's activities and responsibilities in Alaska.

The responsibility for Federal supervision of the \$4.5 billion pipeline project lies with the Department of Interior but existing laws and ongoing programs place the Department of Transportation in a major support role in the overall effort to begin the flow of oil from the Alaskan northern slopes.

Federal Liquid Pipeline Safety Regulations, administered by DOT's Office of Pipeline Safety, apply to the design, construction, testing, operation and maintenance of the pipeline. The regulations have the dual primary purposes of ensuring the integrity of the pipeline itself and the protection of the environment.

Office of Pipeline Safety personnel are represented on the various task forces formed by Interior to formulate pipeline specifications and to monitor as work proceeds the construction, testing and operation of the pipeline.

The Department's largest role is in assisting the movement to Alaska of equipment, supplies and personnel. The main supply route to Alaska is by sea from West Coast ports by barge or ship. The large majority of supplies move in freight cars loaded on barges towed in "trains" powered by tugs.

The U.S. Coast Guard, one of the Department's seven administrations, has the responsibility of aiding navigation, promoting merchant vessel safety and protecting the marine environment.

At Valdez -- the southern terminus of the pipeline and port at which tankers will take on the Alaskan crude oil -- the Coast Guard will establish a Port Safety Unit and install a vessel traffic system to assure the safe movement of tankers and other ships within the area.

In anticipation of future heavy maritime traffic from Alaska to West Coast ports, the Coast Guard plans to expand its vessel traffic system in Puget Sound and the Straits of Juan de Fuca in cooperation with the Canadian Government. It will expedite the installation of a sophisticated electronic aid to navigation - LORAN-C - to provide complete coverage of Alaska and the West Coast area. The Coast Guard also plans to increase aerial surveillance of shipping routes to protect against accidental spills or indiscriminate oily discharges.

An "inland" responsibility of the Coast Guard is to issue bridge permits wherever the pipeline or related roads cross navigable waters.

Alaska is served by the Nation's only Federally-owned and operated railway -- the Alaska Railroad, an operating element of the Department's Federal Railroad Administration.

Completed in 1923, the Railroad's main line runs northward from Seward through Anchorage to Fairbanks in central Alaska. A major southern port railhead is located at Whittier, some 100 miles west of Valdez. From Whittier, rail cars shipped from the West Coast are moved by way of the Alaska Railroad into the interior.

Pipeline construction activity is expected to increase Alaska Railroad tonnage by 30 percent and for the past several years Alaska Railroad management has concentrated on upgrading plant and facilities. A spur line to the Fairbanks International Airport has been constructed and opened to traffic, allowing direct delivery to heavy air transports for transshipment of equipment and supplies to the northern regions.

Already booming and a principal mode of personal transportation in Alaska, air carrier operations are expected to increase by 20 percent with the onset of pipeline construction.

The Federal Aviation Administration of the Department has funded airport development and construction at such unlikely sounding locations as Deadhorse -- near at the northern oilfields -- Gulkana and also at Valdez.

The most modern navigation, communication and weather observation equipment is being installed at Alaskan airports to assure a high degree of safety in the face of extreme climatic conditions. FAA will have the responsibility of certification of construction camp airports capable of handling heavily loaded, air transports which will be built as pipeline construction progresses.

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