



District of Hudson's Hope
Mayor Karen Anderson
Box 330
Hudson's Hope, BC
V0C 1V0

February 26, 2010

Dear: Mayor Karen Anderson

Re: Request formal support for the nomination of the Alaska Highway as a National Historic Site

Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA) has been contracted by the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) to conduct an inventory of the key sites along the Alaska Highway within the Peace River Regional District. Included in the project is to prepare supporting documentation for the further coordination of achieving designation of the Alaska Highway as a National Historic Site (NHS). This first step is the result of ongoing efforts by community groups, key agencies, and political leaders who acknowledge the importance of preserving the history of this international highway. In June 2008, Parks Canada met with the PRRD and community representatives to explain the NHS nomination process and express their support for the Highway in its nomination. NBCTA is ensuring that all stakeholders who use the highway for business, economic development, and / or maintenance, be informed of this initiative.


The nomination will demonstrate how the construction of the Alaska Highway had a nationwide significant impact on Canadian history and illustrate a nationally important aspect of Canadian human history. The NHS designation will ensure recognition of surviving cultural resources. Federal commemoration of the Alaska Highway as a National Historic Site cannot impose control over private property and respects culturally sensitive sites. Such a designation does not place restrictions on construction and upgrades to the highway; it does not restrict owners from making changes to their property; nor does it put any obligations on property owners.

As part of the nomination process NBCTA is contacting First Nations, stakeholders (businesses and agencies), landowners, and local government to request written support for the commemoration of the Alaska Highway as a NHS. It is also important to note that the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) will not consider a submission without the written consent of the owner(s), whether public or private. If the highway is commemorated a NHS, it could potentially include sites for which you are an owner or custodian. We will contact the landowners/custodians of know historic sites in person. Sending your written reply form (included in this package) is a key element of the nomination submission. We would appreciate receiving your letter **by March 4, 2010** addressed to Northern BC Tourism Association.

To date, there are 168 nationally-recognized sites in BC. If successful, the Alaska Highway will be the first national historic site in Northeast British Columbia.

On behalf of NBCTA, Kathleen O'Neill, Outreach Coordinator, PRRD – Alaska Highway NHS project will be informing multi-level stakeholders about the nomination process and welcomes your feedback. Kathleen can be reached through the NBCTA office at 250-785-2544.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'April Moi', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

April Moi

PRRD Tourism Related Projects Manager
Northern BC Tourism Association



Alaska Highway Nomination Project

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

I. PREPARED FOR:

District of Hudson's Hope: Mayor and Council

II. REQUEST:

The Northern BC Tourism Association (NBCTA) is preparing supporting documentation for the further coordination of achieving designation of the Alaska Highway as a National Historic Site. As part of the nomination process, written support for the designation of the Highway is required by March 4, 2010.

III. BACKGROUND:

The NBCTA has been contracted by the Peace River Regional District (PRRD) to conduct an inventory of the key sites along the Alaska Highway within the PRRD. A significant component of the project is to obtain the support from First Nations, local government, stakeholders, and landowners. On-going consultation is currently taking place.

Discussions have occurred in the past few years with various community leaders throughout Northeast BC about the Alaska Highway having nationwide significance on Canadian history.

In 2004, the Alaska Highway International Forum was held in Dawson Creek, BC. Delegates agreed that the Alaska Highway is their "Main Street" and that the historic, cultural and wilderness values must be conserved for residents, visitors and future generations. The outcome of this event was a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed by thirteen (13) BC, Yukon, and Alaska Highway communities, entitled, the Alaska Highway Community Initiative (AHCI), signifying a commitment to work together on matters of mutual importance regarding future planning and development of the Alaska Highway corridor.

In 2005, North East Native Advancing Society (NENAS) signed a MOU to continue to support the AHCI MOUs, sharing a common vision for the Alaska Highway.

In 2007, a series of community workshops held throughout Northeast BC, identified the nomination of the Alaska Highway as a National Historic Site as a priority.

In 2008, Parks Canada met with the PRRD and community representatives to explain the NHS nomination process and express their support for the Highway in its nomination. It was noted that if successful, the Highway would be the first national historic site in Northeast British Columbia (To date, there are approximately 168 nationally-recognized sites in the province of B.C.). In addition, Parks Canada recommended that the nomination be jointly submitted with the Yukon Territory Government and Northern Rockies Regional Municipality nominations.

IV. DISCUSSION:

In the past, the Alaska Highway has been recognized by:

- The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as an Event of National Historic Significance in 1954; and,
- The International Historic Engineering Landmark by the American Society of Civil Engineers and Canadian Society for Civil Engineering in 1996.

For this submission, the Alaska Highway would be nominated under the criteria of **historic place**, telling the story of the construction of the Highway, as well as other contributions leading up to the development of the Highway.

In order to increase the chances of consideration for nomination by HSMBC, each local government should consider officially recognizing the resource as having heritage value to the community. The process for the local government is by placing their portion of the Alaska Highway on a community heritage register. This can be accomplished by way of a resolution to establish a community heritage register, as per the *Local Government Act* Section 954 (1). To date, there is one municipality within the PRRD (City of Dawson Creek) and the Peace River Regional District, who have established a community heritage register.

The establishment of a heritage registry is not regulatory, nor does it protect the property; rather it formally recognizes the property as having heritage value. Federal commemoration of the Alaska Highway as a NHS cannot impose control over private property and respects culturally-sensitive sites. Such a designation does not place restrictions on construction and upgrades to the highway; it does not restrict owners from making changes to their property; nor does it put any obligations on property owners.

It is anticipated that if the nomination is processed in a timely manner, designation could be ready for the 75th Anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway - in 2017. Once the Alaska Highway is recognized by HSMB, and management organization confirmed, there may be opportunities to enter into NHS of Canada's Cost-Sharing Program for a variety of projects, including a heritage interpretive project that foster the public's understanding and appreciation about the national historic significance of the site.

V. SUMMARY:

The success of a national commemoration program as it relates to National Historic Sites is founded on the cooperation of First Nations, property owners, and local / provincial governments.

Federal commemoration of the Alaska Highway could help progress the region's long term vision that the historic, wilderness, and cultural characteristics of the highway be conserved for the benefit of future generations, while respecting the industrial values of this important 'working highway'.

April Moi
PRRD Tourism Related Projects Manager
Northern BC Tourism Association

February 26, 2010