KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

Coastal Management Program
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JOHN J. WILLIAMS
BOROUGH MAYOR

April 2, 2008

Mr. Tom Atkinson, Project Review Supervisor
State of Alaska Department of Natural Resources
Division of Oceans and Coastal Management
Alaska Coastal Management Program
550 West 7th Avenue, Suite 705
Anchorage, Alaska 99501

Subject: SPANDEX Fiber Optic Cable AK 080-04 AA

Dear Mr. Atkinson:

The Kenai Peninsula Borough Coastal District has reviewed the subject project and proposes that the project be found consistent with the Statewide Standards of the Alaska Coastal Management Program.

Project Description

The applicant proposes to install a fiber optic cable beginning in Oregon and routing through federal waters to a branching unit in the Gulf of Alaska. From there, the cable would route into the Kennedy Entrance, around Cape Elizabeth, onto State submerged lands in the vicinity of Port Graham, through the Kachemak Bay Critical Habitat Area and into Homer. The cable will be routed overland from Homer to the Nikiski beach. Submarine cable from Nikiski would route through the Anchorage Coastal Wildlife Refuge, emerging onshore at Point Woronzof in Anchorage.

Entering Alaska State waters from Federal waters in the Gulf, the cable will be buried at least 1.2 meters deep (in areas with water depth of 1,500 meters or less) using a plow proceeding at 1-2 knots. Offshore of Homer, where trawl and long-line fisheries pose a potential threat of entanglement and lifting/pinching cable damage, the applicant will Double Armor (DA) or Single Armor (SA) the cable. Cable laying ships will be fueled in port only.

The cable will emerge ashore at a Homer beach manhole (BMH), which will be cast in place from concrete. Though dubbed a "beach" manhole, this structure would actually be on uplands atop the bluff. To construct the BMH, the applicant will use hydraulic excavators and appropriate erosion control methods to contain materials in the confined work space, compact back-fill material, if suitable, to original density, restore the ground surface to its original condition and haul all unsuitable material to appropriate land fill sites. All conduit entering the BMH will be cast in grout.

To reduce potential beach bank erosion, the applicant will Horizontally Directionally Drill (HDD) from the BMH seaward to a beach headwall, a concrete structure actually in the beach, below grade,

that would serve to anchor the cable and its sheathing. The only headwall in your project would be in Homer. From the headwall, a trench approximately 152' seaward to the Mean Low Water Line will be constructed in which to lay two 4" diameter steel pipes (one active and one spare). From the MLWL to the Mean Low Low Water Line (MLLWL), divers using water jets will bury approx. 800 meters of cable. From the MLLWL, a towed sea plow will be used to bury the cable seaward to the boundary of State waters/submerged land.

Proceeding inland at Homer, the applicant will use either open trench excavation or conduit plowing to place ducts from the BMH to the cable station. Anadromous stream crossings will be accomplished by attaching conduit to existing bridges or overhead utility lines, or by HDD under streambeds, thus requiring no in-water work and no State Fish Habitat Permit(s). Terrestrial boring and trenching equipment would be fueled on paved surfaces using approved tidy tanks. In Nikiski, the applicant will build a BMH on private uplands from which HDD will reach approximately 2,170 feet to a point approx 1,500 feet seaward of the High Tide Line underneath Cook Inlet waters on State submerged lands, impacting no wetlands.

The Nikiski to Anchorage segment would be located in a highly active physical environment where extreme tides and associated tidal currents result in an actively changing bottom, and this segment would also pass through several active DNR oil and gas lease blocks and a group of pipelines connecting the Tyonek Platform to Nikiski. As in all other Alaska State waters, the applicant will armor and bury the cable from Nikiski to Anchorage at least 1.2 meters deep (in areas with water depth of 1,500 meters or less) using a plow proceeding at 1-2 knots. This segment of cable will be double armored in place.

Scope of the Project Review

The scope of this review includes all activities for which the Alaska Department of Natural Resources/Div. of Mining, Land and Water (DMLW) would issue an easement, all activities for which the Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) would issue a Special Area Permit (SAP), and all activities for which the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) would issue individual Section 10 and Section 404 permits.

Beach landings, including BMHs at Homer, Nikiski and Anchorage and the headwall in Homer, would require DMLW easement, and are therefore subject to this ACMP review. Landings in Homer and Anchorage are also subject to this review because they would require an ADF&G Special Area Permit.

If the USACE authorizes Kenai Peninsula and Anchorage overland portions via Nationwide Permit (NWP) 12, those portions NWP 12 authorize would automatically be consistent with the ACMP and would be excluded from the scope of this review, because the ACMP has already found all NWPs consistent, and also because the proposed overland activities would require no State permits (such activities would occur in existing easements or on private property not subject to DMLW easement, and would not include work below Ordinary High Water in streams subject to State permitting authority).

Applicant's proposed activities seaward of Alaska State waters/State submerged lands are excluded from the scope of this review, except, per 11 AAC 110.015, inasmuch as those activities may cause reasonably foreseeable impacts to coastal uses or resources within State waters or on State lands that are subject to the ADNR easement, the ADF&G SAP or the USACE Section 10 &/or

404 permit(s). ACMP Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) regulations at 11 AAC 110.400 (b) (6) (D) and Federal Coastal Zone Management Act regulations at 15 CFR 930.70 – 85 do not apply to to the proposed project. The CPQ evaluation and consistency certification indicate that the applicant does not foresee your activities on the OCS affecting any coastal use or resource in State territory.

Findings

The Statewide Standards of the Alaska Coastal Management Program at 11 AAC 12.250(a), Utility routes and facilities, requires such routes and facilities to be located inland from beaches unless the route or facility is water dependent or no other alternative exists. This project involves bringing an undersea cable on shore and therefore no other practical alternative exists. The Standard at 11 AAC 112.250(b) requires that utility routes and facilities must avoid, minimize or mitigate alterations to surface and ground water, avoid disruption to known wildlife transit or block traditional access. The applicant proposes to bring the cable ashore by boring underground to an upland location where a concrete structure will be built below grade to house the cable connection. The applicant proposes to return disturbed areas to their natural condition and by doing so will mitigate damage caused by construction.

The project involves trenching in a tidal area and to achieve consistency with 11 AAC 112.300(b)(1), Habitats, the project must avoid, minimize or mitigate significant adverse impacts to competing uses such as, commercial, recreational or subsistence fishing. The applicant acknowledges this requirement.

The applicant proposes to bore under anadromous streams or string cable to existing bridges or on overhead utility lines to avoid important stream habitat. The buried sections of cable will be buried in existing right-of-way or easements. The project is consistent with 11 AAC 112.300(b)(9)(c)(1)(2), Habitats, by avoiding disruption important habitat by horizontal directional drilling and minimizing significant adverse impact by returning disturbed areas to their natural condition.

Advisories

The western bluffs on the Kenai Peninsula Borough are actively eroding. Construction activity and permanent installations should be located well away from bluff lines.

The applicant should contact the Kenai Peninsula Borough's flood plain manager to determine if any activity adjacent to water bodies may require a permit.

Any activity within 50 – feet the following streams will require a permit from the Kenai Peninsula Borough: Anchor River, North Fork of Anchor River, Stariski Creek, Deep Creek, Kasilof River, Swanson River, Kenai River and tributaries (see Kenai Peninsula Borough Code of Ordinances 21.18.025).

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this project.

Sincerely,

Gary Williams
Kenai Peninsula Borough
Coastal District Coordinator