



Supporting Salmon, Wildlife, and Community

October 2, 2026

The Susitna River Coalition is sharing several current public comment opportunities involving projects, plans, and regulatory changes that may be relevant to communities in the Mat-Su Valley and Upper Susitna region. We are providing these notices early so councils have time to review the information and decide whether they would like to participate.

October 9 – Proposed changes to the federal definition of Waters of the United States (WOTUS)

October 13 – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers federal review of the AIDEA portion of the proposed West Su Access Road (78.5 miles) from Alexander Creek to the Whiskey-Bravo Airstrip

October 14 – Port MacKenzie Antimony Ore Processing Facility air quality permit

October 21 – Proposed transfer of approximately 885 acres at Point MacKenzie to AIDEA from DNR

October 29 – Draft 2027–2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

Short and expedited comment periods can be difficult to reconcile with regular community council meeting schedules. When a comment period opens and closes between meetings, councils may have little opportunity to review materials, discuss a proposal with members, and determine whether formal input is appropriate. SRC hopes to be a resource for bringing these comment periods to the council's attention now and in the future.

1. Proposed Changes to the Definition of “Waters of the United States” (WOTUS)

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Department of the Army Corp of Engineers have opened a 30-day public comment period on a supplemental proposed rule concerning the federal definition of “waters of the United States” under the Clean Water Act. The definition of WOTUS affects which waters and wetlands fall under federal Clean Water Act jurisdiction, including requirements related to certain federal permitting programs. Because Alaska's wetlands and hydrology differ substantially from much of the country, the potential consequences here are significant: one Alaska analysis estimates that as much as 94% of the state's aquatic resources could fall outside federal Clean Water Act jurisdiction under the proposed approach. This is an important opportunity for Alaskans to understand the proposal and explain how these definitions could affect waters and wetlands in our communities and watersheds.

The comment period closes October 9, 2026 and the [EPA's current information on the proposed rule and public comment process are available here](#). The Susitna River Coalition has also compiled additional [information about the WOTUS proposal and its potential relevance to Alaska](#) which can be viewed here on our website.

5. West Susitna Access Road – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers is accepting public comments on AIDEA's Clean Water Act Section 404 permit application for the proposed West Susitna Access Road, POA-2022-00165. The application addresses proposed impacts to wetlands, streams, and other waters along the road corridor.

The current proposal is substantially similar to the application withdrawn in 2022, but the review process has changed significantly. Earlier plans anticipated a more detailed permit application and additional public review; the project is now proceeding on a compressed timeline under expedited federal permitting procedures, including emergency procedures typically reserved for natural disasters and other urgent circumstances. This is the only public comment opportunity currently planned, making it especially important for communities to review the proposal now and ensure local knowledge, questions, and concerns are included in the federal record.

Comments are due October 13, 2026. The Corps' public notice, application materials, and instructions for submitting comments are available here: [West Susitna Access Road – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Public Notice](#).

2. Port MacKenzie Antimony Ore Processing Facility – Air Quality Permit

The Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation is accepting public comments on the state air quality permit application for the proposed Alaska Range Resources Port MacKenzie Antimony Ore Processing Facility (AQ2002MSS01). The air quality permit application specifically addresses operation of a rock crusher rated at five tons per hour or more. However, project engineering materials and information released by Alaska Range Resources' parent company, Nova Minerals, describe a broader Port MacKenzie processing facility involving crushing, screening, ore sorting, milling, flotation, beneficiation, and refining of antimony concentrate. [A video produced by Nova Minerals illustrating the proposed process is available on YouTube](#). We are also sharing an Antimony Processing Fact Sheet (attached) with additional information about the proposed processing activities and potential environmental and public health considerations

The current comment period closes October 14, 2026, at 11:59 p.m. Alaska time. The notice and [project documents are available](#) through the DEC's public comment system.

3. Proposed Transfer of State Land at Point MacKenzie to AIDEA

The Alaska Department of Natural Resources is accepting public comment on a proposed conveyance of approximately 885 acres of state-owned land near Port MacKenzie to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA). The proposed noncompetitive public and charitable use conveyance would support rail, cargo logistics, and related industrial development at Port MacKenzie.

This is the same public and charitable use conveyance mechanism recently debated by the Mat-Su Borough Assembly in connection with AIDEA's proposed 19,950-acre land transfer near Houston. On September 15th, the Assembly ultimately opposed the Houston transfer, and Borough Manager Mike Brown also explained during Assembly discussion how the Borough's more typical municipal land-entitlement process can move state land toward eventual private ownership while retaining additional steps along the way. [Watch Manager Brown's explanation at the Mat-Su Assembly Meeting](#).

Because the Point MacKenzie proposal would again use this noncompetitive conveyance process to transfer public land to AIDEA, community members may want to review both the proposed use of the land and the mechanism being used to convey it.

The comment period closes October 21, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. [The DNR notice and supporting documents are available](#) to view now. A hearing of the joint house and senate resources committees has been scheduled for October 8th at 1:00PM with DNR to discuss the recent charitable conveyances.

4. Draft 2027–2030 Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities is currently accepting public comments on the Draft 2027–2030 STIP, which outlines federally funded transportation investments throughout Alaska, including roads, bridges, ferries, trails, transit, and other transportation infrastructure.

The draft includes significant changes to projects associated with the West Susitna Access Road. The projected cost for the primary West Susitna corridor has increased from approximately \$89.6 million in the previous STIP to approximately \$227.6 million, while DOT has also divided the corridor into additional project phases, including a new \$104.4 million Susitna River crossing. The draft also adds a separate \$17.25 million, seven-mile Point MacKenzie Connector, bringing the combined forecast for these West Susitna projects to approximately \$244.8 million.

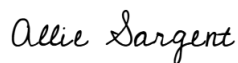
These changes make the current STIP comment period an important opportunity to review how West Susitna transportation projects are changing, how they are being funded, and how these commitments fit alongside transportation priorities elsewhere in the Mat-Su and across Alaska.

The public comment period is open through October 29, 2026. DOT&PF is also holding a virtual public meeting on October 6 from 4:00–5:30 p.m. [The draft STIP and project specifics are available through the interactive project site.](#)

These processes involve different agencies, authorities, and review requirements, so the information available and opportunities for participation vary between them. We encourage councils to review the primary agency materials and determine whether any of these matters warrant discussion or action by your council.

The Susitna River Coalition is available to help answer questions, locate project documents, or provide background information about any of these processes virtually or in-person upon request.

Sincerely,



Allie Sargent
Energy Coordinator, Susitna River Coalition

We would also like to invite council members to our upcoming [10th Annual Wild Su Feast](#), October 18th 5-7PM at Denali Brewing Company. Wild Su Feast is a joyous event that celebrates the wild foods of the Susitna River Watershed & its communities and we would love to see you there!