



Press Release
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AGIA COORDINATOR'S OFFICE

State and Federal Agencies Combine Efforts to Obtain Critical Public Information for Natural Gas Pipeline Route

Anchorage, Alaska – The State of Alaska will conduct a major aerial survey of proposed routes for the large-capacity Alaska natural gas pipeline using laser profiling to map out natural and man-made structures along proposed pipeline rights-of-way.

“The AGIA Coordinator’s Office will provide most of this funding and data obtained from the survey will be released to the public,” said Tom Irwin, Commissioner of the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (DNR). “A portion of the cost for this survey is being provided by the Office of the Federal Coordinator (OFC). This contribution is an example of the cooperation taking place between state and federal agencies to bring North Slope natural gas to market.”

The survey is estimated to cost \$1.75 million. The state will fund \$1.5 million of this project with the remaining \$250,000 coming from the OFC.

According to Rod Combellick, Deputy Director of DNR’s Division of Geological & Geophysical Surveys, the survey will use lidar, or Light Detection and Ranging, along with global positioning system (GPS) and inertial navigation technology to obtain precise locations and elevations of the ground, vegetation, and other above-ground features. The division issued a request for proposals on July 26 and will be overseeing the study.

“This survey will significantly improve our geotechnical understanding of the route for an Alaska gas pipeline or other existing or proposed pipelines from the North Slope to either the Canadian border or Valdez,” said Dr. Mark Myers, the AGIA Coordinator. “Making the survey results public means that Alaskans will be better informed during the regulatory and permitting phases of the Alaska Gasline and other pipeline projects.”

“Lidar has proven extremely useful to identify potentially active faults and other land structures and potential hazards, especially in areas of dense vegetation,” said Combellick. “By obtaining a ‘bare-earth’ view of undetected or potential geological hazards we can avoid or minimize these hazards from jeopardizing the integrity of a future gasline and other facilities.”

More

Lidar release, pg. 2 of 2

Identifying these potential problems in the pre-design stage allows state and federal regulators to ensure the pipeline is routed around serious perils or is designed to prevent damage, much as the Trans-Alaska oil pipeline was specially engineered where it crosses the Denali fault in the central Alaska Range, preventing spillage during the 2002 magnitude 7.9 earthquake.

Data from this survey will also be useful for planning and future developments in these corridors for mapping land cover, vegetation, wetlands drainage patterns, environmental assessments and locating potential construction material sources.

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