



SECTION 2

ALTERNATIVES INCLUDING THE PROPOSED ACTION

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Introduction: Section 2

Alternatives Analyzed

This section describes the alternatives including the proposed action. The proposed action is renewal of the existing right-of-way for the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) (Figure 2-1). The proposed action is compared with the “no-action alternative”: allowing the existing right-of-way (ROW) to expire in the year 2004.

The *proposed action*, discussed in Section 2.1, entails renewal of the ROW, which means that the pipeline and its appurtenances will stay in operation in essentially the same configuration as now. The *no-action alternative* (Section 2.2) involves expiration of the ROW in 2004. In this case, the pipeline system will have to be removed in accordance with the terms of the Federal Grant and State Lease. Federal and state stipulations contain general provisions for “dismantling, removal, and restoration” (DR&R) of TAPS assets upon completion of use of the TAPS ROW. In that case, it would be necessary to prematurely shut in North

Slope production since the pipeline would not be available for transporting crude oil.

Other alternatives considered but not included in the analysis are listed in Section 2.3. Similar alternatives were evaluated in the original TAPS environmental impact statement (EIS) (BLM, 1972) and dismissed because of their impracticality. These included shipping oil through the Northwest Passage by tanker, trucking oil, and transporting by railroad. With TAPS already built and in operation, no practical or economically feasible alternative exists for transporting North Slope crude oil to market.

Definition of Pipeline System

While the proposed action involves only the pipeline ROW itself, the environmental effects associated with the proposed action come from operation of the Trans Alaska Pipeline System (TAPS) and not from the existence of the ROW. As a result, this Environmental Report focuses on all of TAPS, which is defined in Stipulation 1.1.1.22 of the Federal Grant to include “all facilities located in Alaska used by Permittees in connection with the construction, operation, maintenance or termination of the Pipeline.” As a result, Section 2.1 describes all of these elements of TAPS.

Stipulation 1.1.1.22 excludes from the definition of TAPS those “facilities used in connection with production of oil or gathering systems” and “urban administrative offices and similar facilities which are only indirectly involved.” By this definition, the Alaska North Slope (ANS) oil fields and the marine transportation link are not parts of TAPS. However, for the convenience of the reader and for the sake of continuity, the discussion of the proposed action in Section 2.2 includes the marine transportation link.



Photo 2-1. Vertical support members (VSMs) elevate the trans-Alaska pipeline in areas of thaw-unstable permafrost.



Figure 2-1.
State of Alaska map showing place names
and trans-Alaska pipeline route.