

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 28, 2006

#06-066

**CANADIAN PREMIERS, ALASKA GOVERNOR COMMIT TO NEXT STEPS ON
ALASKA GAS PIPELINE PROJECT**

(ANCHORAGE) - Alaska Governor Frank H. Murkowski hosted Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie, Alberta Premier Ralph Klein, and John van Dongen, Minister of State for Intergovernmental Affairs representing British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell, in Anchorage Tuesday for the Alaska-Canada Regional Summit. The purpose of the summit was to discuss issues of mutual importance to the four northern governments.

Construction of a \$20-billion natural gas pipeline along the Alaska Highway to bring Alaska's vast North Slope gas resources to market was the major focus of the meeting. The leaders agreed to the need for a strategic action plan to facilitate efficient permitting and construction in Canada.

"Our four governments are committed to expeditiously advancing this project," said Murkowski. "In order for Alaska to maximize benefits from its gas, that gas must get to consumers in the most cost-effective manner possible. Our Canadian partners are a critical link in that chain. We must work together to realize the benefits of the gas pipeline project for our people."

The governor noted that bringing Alaska's gas resources to market provides both the United States and Canada with needed natural gas.

"We need Alaska gas," said the governor. "Our mutual national security interests are best served by having a safe, secure, domestic supply of natural gas to heat homes and power industry. We can fill our nations' demand for gas now, before imports meet that demand in our domestic markets."

"Alberta fully supports the construction of an Alaska gas pipeline as it can be a tremendous win-win for Americans as well as Canadians," said Alberta Premier Ralph Klein. "We are pleased by what we heard here in terms of progress toward that goal. We have been privileged to work with

Governor Murkowski's administration to this point in time, and will continue to do all we can to bring this project to fruition."

"Agreement amongst our governments, to coordinate and collaborate on actions to move the Alaska gas pipeline project forward, is key to achieving our interests," said Yukon Premier Dennis Fentie. "Yukon has consistently said that some of our key interests include ensuring training, employment and business opportunities associated with construction and operation of the pipeline are maximized for our citizens and that Yukon has access to the gas and the ability to put Yukon gas in the pipeline."

"B.C. is increasingly seeing the benefits of the oil and gas industry in our province, an industry with a mature approach to both to community relations and First Nations relations," said Minister John van Dongen, Intergovernmental Relations Minister, who attended the meeting on behalf of British Columbia Premier Gordon Campbell. "We look forward to working with our neighbors to ensure we all benefit from this industry."

After a luncheon address sponsored by a number of Alaska organizations, meetings concluded with discussions of enhanced ferry service between Ketchikan and Prince Rupert, and the need for electric inter-ties connecting Southeast Alaska with British Columbia.

Murkowski and Fentie also held a meeting of the Alaska-Canada Railroad Advisory Committee to receive an update on the status of the railroad feasibility study scheduled for release this summer.

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