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DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE,
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State and Yukon Governments Agree to study Economic Corridor Development

(Juneau, AK) – The State of Alaska and the Government of the Yukon today signed an Appendix to the existing Alaska-Yukon Intergovernmental Relations Accord expressing the intent to collaborate in the identification and evaluation of an economic development corridor between Southeast Alaska and the Yukon that is capable of transmitting electric power and telecommunications services. The agreement calls for the two governments to work jointly on a scope of work for and provide funds to conduct an economic analysis of opportunities on either side of our shared border.

“This agreement brings potential benefits to communities in both the Yukon and Alaska from the increased availability of broadband and access to affordable electrical generation. To examine the feasibility for increasing fiber optic networks that would potentially connect in Juneau and perhaps include a Ketchikan to Prince Rupert link, as well as potential energy projects, is welcome news for Southeast Alaska,” said Commissioner Susan Bell. “Communications infrastructure and affordable energy are the foundations needed to build strong communities.”

Staff within the Alaska Department of Commerce, Community and Economic Development will now work with Canadian counterparts from the Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Energy, Mines and Resources to formulate a scope of work to produce a single report evaluating the conditions and options that could support development of this economic corridor.

Wording of the agreement also allows the participation, by mutual consent, of other entities participating in the work process. Both governments anticipate

participation from the Municipality of Skagway, and respective utilities, as they have expressed interest in developing electric generation capabilities that would prove to be beneficial on both sides of the border. The governments also expect interest from telecommunication firms that could provide data and insight into the potential for broadband expansion in the Upper Lynn Canal region.

The mission of the Department is to promote a healthy economy, strong communities, and protect consumers in Alaska. The Alaska Energy Authority works closely with the private sector and other agencies within the department including the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority, the Alaska Gasline Development Corporation, the Division of Economic Development, and the Division of Community and Regional Affairs. For more information about the department, visit www.commerce.alaska.gov.

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