

Alaska State Legislature

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Legislative Council



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Sponsor Statement HB 259 Version L

Whether someone overflows the bed of their truck with rocks and gravel, plywood, scrap metal, loose debris on their way to the dump, or simply fails to tie down large objects in a flatbed, unsecured loads are an undisputed hazard to other users of the roadway and pedestrians. Improperly secured loads can cause serious injuries, property damage, and fatalities. The AAA Foundation for Traffic Safety concluded that from 2011-2014, road debris was a factor in more than 200,000 police-reported crashes. Those crashes resulted in approximately 39,000 injuries and 500 deaths. Additionally, the report found that about two-thirds of these accidents were the result of items falling from a vehicle due to unsecured loads and improper maintenance. In another study by the U.S Government Accountability Office, it was found that there were approximately 440 fatalities caused by roadway debris in 2010; that data was gathered by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

All 50 states have laws that require drivers to properly secure loads in any vehicle or trailer and impose fees that range from \$10 to \$5,000. In most states, failing to properly secure a load is a traffic violation. In Alaska, even if it results in the serious physical injury, it is an infraction punishable by a fine not to exceed \$300. However, 15 states have instituted possible criminal penalties for failing to properly secure loads.

Last year, the State of Alaska, the Mayor of Anchorage, the Anchorage Assembly, the Mayor of the Mat-Su Borough, and the Mat-Su Borough Assembly officially declared June 6th as Secure Your Load Day by issuing proclamations and resolutions recognizing the hazards of failing to take the simple steps of securely affixing every load.

HB 259 increases Alaska's standards for load securement of all types of materials and requires covering or maintaining six inches of freeboard with loads consisting of sand, dirt, gravel, rock, or similar materials. It also raises a violation to the level of a Class A misdemeanor on the first offense if it results in the serious physical injury to another person or causes \$1,000 or more in property damage.

The legislation will decrease roadway litter, property damage, injuries, and fatalities on Alaska's highways. It is a responsible measure to protect the safety of Alaskan drivers and avoid costly repairs that result from the actions or inactions of others.

Thank you for your support of this legislation.

If you have any questions, please contact my staff, Matt Gruening, at 465-3271.