



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
Representative Genevieve Mina
Member, House Health and Social Services Committee
Member, House Transportation Committee
Serving House District 19: Airport Heights, Mountain View, & Russian Jack

HB 355 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to the duties of the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities; and relating to a statewide public and community transit plan."

The Alaska Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) stewards the state's transportation system, and their statutory responsibilities include studying alternative means of improving transportation in the state. Currently, DOT&PF is only required to study alternative modes of transportation in urban areas.

HB 355 seeks to expand the scope of DOT&PF's long-term statewide transportation planning to ensure local input by public, tribal, and community transit programs in improving Alaska's multimodal network. Examples of existing community transit programs include Anchorage's People Mover, Nome's Tribal Transit Program, Juneau's Capital Transit, and Tok's Interior Alaska Bus Line. Local collaboration on transportation planning is a requirement for federal funding of transportation projects. Lack of proper public engagement can lead to Title VI violations and puts Alaska at risk of reduced federal funding and lawsuits.

Alternatives transportation methods are essential for Alaskans with mobility issues, those without access to a car, or who otherwise cannot drive. Public transportation provides inclusive and equitable mobility for Alaskans, especially for low-income Alaskans, youth, and the elderly. Increasing transit options provides a safe, essential means for Alaskans to go to work, receive medical care, access community resources, and participate in recreation activities. Additionally, according to a 2022 DOT&PF study, Alaska communities benefit from transit due to job creation, increased business sales, reduction of road congestion, air pollution, and travel times.

Access to public and community transit is essential to connect all Alaskans to their jobs and communities. HB 355 improves the annual study, reporting, and development of Alaska's multimodal transportation network.

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