

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Senate Bill 47 Sponsor Statement

*“An Act relating to Chugach State Park; and providing for an effective date.”*

Chugach State Park hosts 1.5 million visitors annually – more than Denali National Park – and most of the road traffic leading to the park originates from outside of the Anchorage Hillside neighborhood. The roads that provide access to the park, including the Glen Alps and Upper DeArmoun/Canyon Road corridors are in need of significant upgrades. In 2023, Anchorage residents voted to establish the Chugach State Park Access Service Area (CASA), which includes the Anchorage Bowl, creating the first mechanism for financing capital upgrades to roads leading to Chugach State Park. In 2024, Anchorage voters approved a \$4 million bond to fund much needed improvements to Canyon Road, which is in poor condition. This project involves paving and drainage for about 0.6 miles of the road, extending to the park boundary. About half of this section lies within Chugach State Park, and because the municipality cannot bond for improvements on state-owned land, those portions fall outside the scope of the bond.

To address this, SB 47 reinforces existing statutes designating the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOT&PF) as the agency responsible for maintaining public roads within Chugach State Park. This ensures DOT&PF will continue managing the maintenance of roads that provide access to this important state resource. Additionally, the bill grants the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) the authority to grant easements or rights-of-ways within Chugach State Park to municipalities. This provision allows municipalities to improve access to the park, provided they meet certain requirements. Before granting any easements, the DNR commissioner must provide public notice and hold hearings. If an easement is granted, responsibility for maintaining and repairing the road will shift from the state to the municipality.

By allowing municipalities to assume responsibility for certain infrastructure improvements, SB 47 provides the flexibility needed to support upgrades that will increase safety, access, and overall public enjoyment of Chugach State Park. It creates a pathway for municipalities to invest in and maintain key resources within their community, improving access to trailheads and other park features.

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