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# Alaska State Legislature House of Representatives



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## Representative Jay Ramras District 10

### Sponsor Statement HB 114

“An Act relating to availability of state transportation facilities and state-owned or state-operated transportation modes for delivering compassionate aid.”

House Bill 114 is a compassionate aid bill that would enable the Governor to use state transportation to provide aid to Alaska communities in times of eminent disaster without declaring a disaster.

In the initial week of the 26<sup>th</sup> Legislative session, the village of Emmonak wrote a declaration of economic disaster to the Department of Commerce, Community and, Economic Development. As private and public entities worked together to raise donations of money and food for relief to Emmonak it became apparent that they were not the only village in desperate need of aid and attention. The following weeks, Representative Ramras and his staff worked with the Fairbanks and Anchorage Food Banks and local faith based organizations to raise over 30,000 pounds of food for eleven villages in Western Alaska.

Due to the current restrictions, state transportation could not be used because a disaster had not been declared. Consequently, Representative Ramras and staff had two options: 1) use the monetary donations towards transportation; thus taking away precious funds for additional food or 2) work with transportation companies to provide their services for free or discounted rates.

Ultimately, based on the collective generosity of a few transportation companies, the food was able to arrive in all of the eleven villages.

House Bill 114 would reduce the need to spend donated funds on transportation and instead, allow a sharper focus on gathering the resources needed for relief.