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HB57 provides Alaskans access to bicycles and encourages bike use as an alternative mode of transportation. This bill creates the Safe Bicycle Ridership grant program for municipalities and non-profits. The increased access to bikes gives Alaskans a choice to respond to high fuel costs in an unstable economy. This availability of an alternative to motor vehicles will benefit many Alaskans and reduce transportation costs while promoting improved community health.

HB57 allows municipalities and nonprofit organizations to apply for state funding to develop and sponsor alternatives to motorized travel by encouraging safe bicycle use. The Department of Transportation will develop regulations establishing criteria for community grant awards, education of grant requirements, evaluate grant applications, and award money. Non-profits and municipalities can propose programs to increase bicycle use in the way that best fits their community. This may be a bike share program, education of safe use of bicycles, a voucher system, or any variation that fits the unique needs of the community.

One example is the City/Borough of Juneau's award winning Bike program that has been working successfully for 3 years. Juneau, in partnership with several local non-profits created the "Bikes, Bikes, Bikes Community Program." This program acquires abandoned bikes through the police department and donations from the community. A local Youth Center provides a maintenance room where young adults learn how to repair and maintain these bikes. The repaired bikes are painted all one color and loaned out to the public with a focus on youth. This program is widely popular and works throughout the summer months.

Shifting a portion of Alaskan's personal travel to bicycling can result in safe non-motorized transportation, improved public health, a decrease in road maintenance, less air and water pollution, and a more vibrant state and population. This transition will also save individuals money by lowering fuel and vehicle maintenance costs and help the State and local government by reducing congestion on the highway.

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