

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE PEGGY WILSON HOUSE DISTRICT 33

SPONSOR STATEMENT House Joint Resolution 10

“Proposing amendments to the constitution of the State of Alaska creating a transportation infrastructure fund”

HJR 10 will put a constitutional amendment before voters to amend the Alaska constitution to reinstate a dedicated fund for transportation projects. If this change is passed by the voters, the **Alaska Transportation Infrastructure Fund (ATIF)** will dedicate transportation user fees and taxes to transportation projects.

The crafters of the constitution allowed for two dedicated transportation funds at the time of statehood, one for land transportation and one for sea transportation. They realized that some funds would be needed no matter the economic or political climate. They lasted for several years until they were eliminated. HJR 10 will reinstate a transportation fund.

In FY14, 79% of our capital transportation budget will come from the federal government. The Federal Government passed a new, two year highway program, MAP-21. The good news is that the overall federal-aid funding remains consistent with SAFETEA-LU, the previous program. However, the amount of funding for roads not on the National Highway System (NHS) has been cut by about 50%. We will see a lot less funding for our borough and city roads. The categories of funding have been reduced and they are much more restrictive. Our own DC delegation have told the legislature that Alaska needs to rely less on the federal government and start shouldering some of the burden of improving our transportation infrastructure.

The roads, bridges, airports, ferries and transit systems that make up our state’s transportation system are essential to mobility, commerce and economic development. This system enhances economic competitiveness, increases safety and enhances quality of life. There is a growing imbalance between system use and capacity as well as the need for new infrastructure to access our valuable resources. To insure Alaska has the infrastructure necessary to develop our resources as well as providing a quality of life for our citizens we must commit to funding transportation. Having a dependable revenue stream from year to year will allow Alaska to tackle today’s congestion and maintenance projects as well as developing the needed access to resources and energy.