



February 25, 2013

Representative Peggy Wilson, Chair
House Transportation Committee
State Capitol, Room 406
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Wilson:

The Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association (AOPA) is a membership organization consisting of over 400,000 pilots and aircraft owners. Over 4,400 of our members reside in Alaska. AOPA is committed to the health and viability of aviation and airports in Alaska, and across the nation. Thank you for taking up the issue of creating a state funded transportation program for Alaska.

AOPA supports the concept embodied in HJR 10, HB 122 and HB 123, to establish a transportation infrastructure endowment fund for Alaska. The endowment is to be dedicated to funding projects that maintain and improve our public infrastructure, including airports, roads and marine facilities. We can speak to the tremendous need for improvements within the airport system that benefit all the citizens of the state. Our aviation system is absolutely essential for the 82% of Alaskan communities that are not on the road system, many of which rely solely on aviation for year-around access. In addition, the road-system airports provide the ability for aircraft to connect with rural communities, creating literally a lifeline for the movement of goods, services and people within the state.

Thank you again for undertaking this legislation. I look forward to working with you and your committee on this initiative to address the needs of the state's transportation system.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom George".

Tom George
Alaska Regional Manager

TOM GEORGE
ALASKA REGIONAL MANAGER
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CALISTA CORPORATION
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March 5, 2013

Representative Peggy Wilson
State Capital Room 406
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: State Transportation Program - House Bill 123

Dear Representative Wilson,

Calista Corporation is writing to support the Alaska Transportation Infrastructure Fund Program - House Bill 123. There have been public hearings on it across the state the last two years; it was vetted in subcommittees; and overall it has been widely supported. We view this as a positive step and solution towards addressing basic core transportation infrastructure needs throughout all regions of Alaska.

The bill re-establishes the multimodal Transportation Infrastructure program and authority put into our constitution by the state founding members. They recognized development of Alaska would be dependent on a transportation network, and the essential role transportation plays for a healthy economy and any business development. Those basic core needs still exist in Alaska, they have yet to have been fulfilled in providing access to markets, supplies and resources which businesses must have to be competitive and provide economic opportunities for people. Our own Calista region is perhaps a model of how a lack of a basic transportation and energy infrastructure network has had far reaching negative social and economic impacts since statehood. Today the YK region has some of the highest costs of living in the nation, highest levels of suicide, fewest resource businesses, and sadly a district with lowest per capita incomes in the country. One of our highest priorities is regional infrastructure – it is necessary for community sustainability and any business development or survival.

Alaska once had strong road and airport programs without the federal funding which we rely on today. Currently, there is an \$8 billion backlog of important transportation reconstruction projects that were paid for with mostly federal funds. This does not include roads, ports, or airports yet to be built to access whole regions. The state transportation department has become highly dependent on federal funds for transportation infrastructure planning, permitting, building, and even maintenance. This is unacceptable to many of the funding agencies and other states' which continually point to Alaska as: 1. sitting on huge unspent savings, 2. having the lowest fuel tax nationally and contributing little to nothing to our National Transportation trust which Alaska takes funds from, and 3. having no state tax to support its own infrastructure. Furthermore, Alaska has NO state funded program of any kind to count on for basic its ongoing infrastructure construction and maintenance. These issues put Alaska into the untenable situation of being one of the only states' lacking a state funded transportation program. However, it continues to rely on federal transportation trust fund dollars paid into and supported by all the other states' which each have some form of their own funding program. Being in non-compliance with federal grant assurances that are signed onto and required to maintain that

infrastructure places Alaska at great risk. It can result in receiving less regular program funding and discretionary money from shrinking federal programs which Alaska relies on. The State has been notified of these facts, as have most organizations, groups, and citizens going to Washington D.C. to request funding.

Aside from the obvious needs already mentioned, other positive economic benefits of an Alaska Transportation Infrastructure fund program in our state include:

- Transportation infrastructure investment which provides stable, predictable, good paying jobs for both the short and long term (47,000 jobs in Alaska today and one of the strongest industry sectors).
- Operational improvements to business and industry costs, efficiencies, and competitiveness.
- Access to resources and development in a largely resource dependent state.
- Strengthening local, regional, and state economies.
- Proper maintenance which results in fewer expenses and losses associated with safety, accidents, and vehicle wear to businesses.
- Boosts to both business and leisure travel.
- Lower prices for commodities, shipping, and travel.
- Reduced losses associated with time, travel, congestion, and lack of ready access for businesses.
- State funded projects that can be built appropriate to Alaska which are significantly cheaper, faster, and with fewer Federally mandated high population density design requirements

House Bill 123 may not solve each and every transportation issue in Alaska; however, it is a forward step required to establish a basic program and begin solving our complex transportation infrastructure needs in a fair, consistent, and thoughtful manner that is standard in every other state in the United States.

Calista supports re-establishment of a state transportation infrastructure program which can be consistently counted on in all regions and communities of Alaska. Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important piece of legislation.

Respectfully,



Andrew Guy
President and Chief Executive Officer

cc: *Commissioner Pat Kemp*
Governor Sean Parnell



March 4, 2013

Representative Peggy Wilson
State Capitol Room 406
Juneau, AK 99801

Via E-mail: rep.peggy.wilson@akleg.gov

RE: Support of HJR10 & HB123

Dear Representative Wilson,

Most of the current spending on Alaska's transportation program comes from federal sources. Alaska receives significantly more from the Federal Highway Trust Fund than it contributes and the Alaska motor fuel tax of \$.08 per gallon is the lowest in the nation with the average state tax over 0.20.

The outlook for the federal program causes us concern. Many people believe that Alaska's share of the federal "highway trust fund pie" will decrease in the future. Like many, we believe we have got to, as a state, step up and start paying more of the share. There are many strings, rules and regulations attached to a federal dollar that decrease its purchasing power - we can get more accomplished faster with state dollars.

There is strong agreement that the economic benefits derived from the investment in Alaska's transportation infrastructure far exceed the cost of the investment. Considering the vastness of the state, the current transportation infrastructure of Alaska is inadequate and requires continued planning, upgrades, and expenditures to assure the citizens of Alaska are provided with essential services. To realize its potential, Alaska needs a state funded transportation program that is adequately and predictably funded, provides continuity between succeeding administrations, and considers all modes of transportation.

I urge the legislature to pass HJR10 & HB123 to establish a Transportation Infrastructure Fund.

Sincerely,

Pat Harrison
Pacific Northwest Area Manager



International Union of Operating Engineers

LOCAL 302 • Washington and Alaska • AFL-CIO

Daren Konopaski, Business Manager and General Vice President

Corey Baxter, District 8 Representative

February 25, 2013

The Honorable Peggy Wilson
Alaska State House
State Capitol, Room 406
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Representative Wilson:

The International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302 would like to extend our support for the Alaska Transportation Infrastructure Fund.

We have over 4,000 members in Alaska that help build roads, airports, and harbor facilities. This bill would help to fund new projects in the event of the potential loss of federal funding in the near future. It will create jobs for Alaskans and it will keep our economy strong for many years to come.

Alaska needs a dependable revenue stream to fund the infrastructure that is necessary to develop access to the resources and energy projects that are critical for the future of Alaska.

Thank you for all of your continuing efforts to ensure that Alaska has a productive and self-sustaining future.

Sincerely,

Corey Baxter
District 8 Representative
International Union of Operating Engineers Local 302
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March 5, 2013

Representative Peggy Wilson
State Capitol Room 406
Juneau, AK 99801

REFERENCE: Establishment of a State Transportation Fund

Dear Representative Wilson:

I would like to register strong support for the establishment of a State Transportation Fund.

The safety of Alaskan highways has long been a concern; the condition of pavement and road structures, including bridges, has deteriorated significantly over time, and they are always subject to harsh environmental conditions. The low density of the population and the long distances between population centers in Alaska means there are proportionally many more miles of roadway to maintain, and a State Transportation Fund is necessary to supplement Federal Funding to ensure that current roads can be maintained and new roads developed to appropriate standards.

The establishment of a dedicated State Transportation Fund could also underpin alternate project funding methods that could leverage the fund value by providing the necessary credit rating to underwrite any form of Public Private Partnership, through which private investments could be used for further development of Alaskan transportation infrastructure. The fund could also benefit as the single repository of fuel taxes and tolls, and would be self-sustaining if properly established at the outset.

While Federal Funding and bonds presently make up a significant portion of Alaskan transportation spending, these sources are subject to severe reductions in the future, due to either reduced Federal spending or potentially unfavorable interest rates. The establishment of a State Transportation Fund will provide stability and predictability to the development of the State, and is entirely compatible with National and International approaches to paying for transportation infrastructure.

Sincerely,

COLASKA, INC.

Rob Dun
Business Development Manager