

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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REPRESENTATIVE STEVE THOMPSON

CS for House Bill 154 Sponsor Statement

“An Act relating to natural and cultural history repositories.”

HB 154 amends the statutes (AS 14.40) by adding a new section (14.40.072) that gives the University of Alaska the power to designate the University of Alaska Museum of the North at the Fairbanks campus as a repository of state natural and cultural history collections and gives the University of Alaska the power to designate other repositories as needed.

The University of Alaska Museum of the North qualifies for designation as a repository because the facility is a museum that is managed by an educational institution and is able to provide long-term professional, systematic, and accountable curatorial services.

The Alaska State Museums (Alaska State Museum and Sheldon Jackson Museum) and the University of Alaska Museum of the North are considered the de facto State natural and cultural history repositories—the places where specimens and objects are placed on deposit for long-term preservation and use. Designating the University of Alaska Museum of the North as an official state repository will help ensure that the collection of specimens and objects of natural and cultural history remain in the State and are available to researchers, students, and Alaska citizens. Additionally, the three museums share complementary strengths and their strategic geographic placement ensures the greatest possible access to collections by all Alaskans.

Specimens in the collections provide a permanent, physical record of Alaska’s natural and cultural history and its environmental conditions. The Museum of the North supports internal research activity and is heavily involved in formal and informal education. A most important role is as a collection repository, providing specimens and objects for researchers throughout Alaska and the world.

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