



ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

House Community and Regional Affairs Committee

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SPONSOR STATEMENT

House Bill 213

"An Act requiring the commissioner of natural resources to make specific, detailed written findings before restricting or prohibiting a traditional means of access to state land, water, or land and water for a traditional outdoor activity; and requiring certain public notice of a proposed restriction or prohibition of a traditional means of access to state land, water, or land and water for a traditional outdoor activity."

HB 213 strengthens two sections of current law to give citizens better access to information about the status of their public lands. Specifically, the bill directs the commissioner of natural resources to notify the public before he or she closes public rights of way. There are two parts to the new requirement: the first part is a written finding by the commissioner; the second part is that notice to the public meets the requirements of AS38.05.945.

HB 213 seeks to address situations where the public needs advance notice of restrictions or prohibitions of access to public land for traditional outdoor activities. In the past, the Department of Natural Resources has closed trails used by the public for hunting, mining, or to access their cabins, without adequate public notice, leaving the public without options to access public lands and conduct their activities.

HB 213 will help to clarify DNR's responsibility to the public in managing public lands for them on their behalf.