



# Representative Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

District 1 Fairbanks

## House Bill 204 Sponsor Statement

*An act relating to overtaking and passing certain stationary vehicles.*

The Alaska Department of Transportation & Public Facilities (DOT&PF) mission is to “Keep Alaska Moving through service and infrastructure.” As part of achieving this mission, the State of Alaska has a duty to ensure our beautiful roadways are safe traveling and working environments.

House Bill 204 would add DOT&PF road maintenance vehicles to the list of vehicles that already require drivers to vacate the nearest lane or to slow down when approaching certain stationary vehicles conducting official business. These include emergency, fire, law enforcement and animal control vehicles and tow trucks when lights are flashing and performing official duties.

Currently, to alert and prevent drivers from coming within an unsafe distance of a work zone, DOT&PF employees place cones and deploy flares. However, these are only visual deterrents and are frequently ignored. With no law requiring the traveling public to grant a certain area of distance between their vehicle and a roadside DOT&PF vehicle, drivers are not legally required to do otherwise. As a result, they put themselves and DOT&PF employees needlessly at risk.

At the state level, if a driver fails to vacate the lane or slow down as required and causes personal injury, the driver is guilty of a class A misdemeanor. If a person violates the law, but does not cause personal injury, the driver is subject to \$150 fine and 2 points assessed against the driver’s license.

DOT&PF is already fitted with flashing lights designed to alert traffic of their presence and status of performing road work. To implement HB 204, no additional equipment costs are required.

More than 35,000 people are injured in work zones nationwide, while about 700 people, including 130 workers, are killed in work zone accidents every year. This bill would help avoid dangerous, unnecessary collisions, resulting in saving lives and thousands of dollars for both potential victims and the State.

I urge your support of HB 204, a simple bill in the interest of Alaska’s road travelers and state employees.

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