

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION

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SPONSOR STATEMENT Senate Concurrent Resolution 10

“Proclaiming 2018 the Year of Innovation in Alaska”

Senate Concurrent Resolution 10 would proclaim 2018 as the Year of Innovation in Alaska. Innovation has been a constant theme throughout the first session of the 30th Alaska Legislature. Whether growing our state’s economy, harnessing technology to improve Alaskans’ quality of life, or modernizing state government in a tough fiscal environment; innovation can help address challenges facing Alaska.

Alaskans are innovators by tradition and necessity. The pioneering spirit that founded and built our state is rooted in innovation. These range from engineering marvels that built early mines, railroads and the Trans-Alaska Pipeline, to public policies that have transformed life in our state such as the Alaska Permanent Fund and Community Development Quotas.

Collaboration between regional and statewide economic development groups, universities, investors, businesses and entrepreneurs has helped create an innovation community in Alaska. Aligning stakeholders around collective action helps engage the next generation of Alaskan entrepreneurs. Events such as UAF’s Arctic Innovation Competition, the Innovation Summit, Alaska Startup Week, and the Launch: Alaska accelerator create an ecosystem for innovation and help bring new ideas to market.

Innovation and entrepreneurship are crucial for long-term economic development and diversifying Alaska’s economy. The National Bureau of Economic Research reports that net job creation is driven by startups -- creating an average of three million jobs annually. Alaska’s current fiscal climate calls for innovative solutions, as seen in the work of many legislative committees and formation of a bipartisan, bicameral Innovation Caucus.

Proclaiming 2018 as the Year of Innovation in Alaska raises the level of this discussion and highlights how creativity can improve our state. Senate Concurrent Resolution 10 directs the attention of Alaskans toward out-of-the-box thinking, creating a culture in Alaska where innovation and entrepreneurship are accepted and encouraged.

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