

ALASKA STATE HOUSE

Session:

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REPRESENTATIVE DAVE TALERICO

Sponsor Statement for House Joint Resolution 12

Completing the Northern Rail Extension to Fort Greely and Delta Junction would support Military operations, mining, and agricultural in the Interior of Alaska.

In the Act of 1914, the United States Congress authorized the construction of a railroad in Alaska. The railroad was to connect one or more open harbors in Alaska, with the Interior of Alaska, to develop agricultural and mineral resources of Alaska, and the settlement of people on public lands therein, to provide transportation of fuels for the Military, transporting troops, arms, munitions, the mail, and other governmental and public uses. Unfortunately, that dream was never realized.

The Alaska Railroad Transfer Act (ARTA) of 1983, the U.S. Congress again recognized the importance of the railroad in providing freight and passenger rail service to Alaska. Congress also found that continuation of services and the expansion of those services are necessary to achieve Federal, State, and private objectives. The State's continued operation together with expansion of the railroad constitutes an appropriate public use of the rail system. Once again, the dream of expansion was unrealized.

Finally, in 2013, almost one hundred years later, the Northern rail expansion was proposed by Alaska Railroad in conjunction with the Department of Defense, the four phased plan was completed. Phase one, Crossing the Tanana River, was completed. The remaining three phases need to be accomplished before we can realize completion of the Northern rail expansion.

With the expansion of the Fort Greely missile complex and expanded training ranges, increased agriculture in Delta Junction, and increased mining operations in the area. This resolution supports critical infrastructure development, national security, economic development, and natural resource development in the State of Alaska. The Northern Rail Extension project would provide essential freight and passenger service to support transportation and mobility needs of the region.

This is a project long overdue for Alaska and I ask for your support for this resolution.

Please call my staff at 907-465-4527 for any questions.