

Alaska State Legislature

Senator Shelley Hughes, Chair
Session: Capitol Room 30
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-3743



Senator Mike Shower
Senator David Wilson
Senator Peter Micciche
Senator Jesse Kiehl

Senate Transportation Committee

SJR 11 U.S.-Canada Railroad Presidential Permit

Sponsor Statement

Presidential Permits are issued by the United States Secretary of State for international crossings of any kind. Whether cross-border liquid pipelines for water and petroleum products or cross-border infrastructure, such as land-border crossings, bridges, tunnels, conveyor belts, tramways, and railroads, they are a standard part of a project development process as a determination of national interest including but not limited to: foreign policy; energy and border security; safety; environmental, cultural, and economic impacts; and compliance with applicable law and policy. The Senate Transportation Committee has been updated on current interest and work on building a railroad that crosses the border between the State of Alaska and the Yukon Territory. This railroad link would connect Alaska to both Canada and the Lower 48, opening tremendous commerce opportunities to our state.

Senate Joint Resolution 11 urges the Secretary of State to issue a Presidential permit for a the cross-border rail link which would connect Alberta, Canada and Alaska. In 1914, the United States Congress passed legislation approving construction of up to 1,000 miles of railroad in the Territory of Alaska, to connect coastal and interior regions to support development, rail service, and military operations. Little more than 500 miles of the Alaska Railroad have been built thus far.

In 2004, the 23rd Alaska State Legislature authorized the Alaska Railroad Corporation to delineate a corridor between the existing railroad utility corridor and the Canadian border as well as to investigate an extension of the Alaska Railroad from the border of Alaska and Canada to connect with the North American railroad system. This connection to Canada and the Lower 48 starts with a border crossing permit into Canada.

Please join the Senate Transportation Committee in supporting this Joint Resolution to urge the U.S. Secretary to take action that will allow new economic opportunities for Alaska.

Staff contact: Aimee Bushnell, (907) 465-1173