

# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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## **REPRESENTATIVE WES KELLER DISTRICT 14**

### **SPONSOR STATEMENT**

#### **HJR 40**

#### **“RS 2477 RIGHTS-OF-WAY”**

House Joint Resolution 40 is the next step in moving transportation corridors forward in Alaska. All across the state there are hundreds of traditional trails and routes that have been used for centuries. These corridors are a critical part of how we will transport goods and services in the future.

Even Congress recognized that when it enacted and repealed Revised Statute 2477's that these trails have the tradition and need to be continued and even expanded to improve commerce. In several states across the west, including Alaska the repeal included language allowing the identification of existing potential RS 2477's as they have become to be called.

So far Alaska has identified 670 right-of ways that clearly qualify. These are part of the more than 20,000 R.S. 2477s already identified in the West. The problem now is convincing the federal government to release these to the states.

This resistance by Federal departments has resulted in the state's having to take the issue to court. Presently the lead suit is Utah and Alaska needs to join in that effort with a minimum of an amicus brief.

This resolution commends the administration for its efforts so far and also directs it to continue its efforts by supporting Utah's lawsuit. It also raises the current Alaska bar by asking the Governor to provide a request to the next legislature for specific funding to continue the RS 2477 efforts.

Without this effort commerce in Alaska will continue to be expensive and nearly impossible. RS 2477s are a critical key that cannot be ignored.

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