

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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State Capitol, Rm. 418
Juneau, AK 99801

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House Energy Committee,
Co-Chair

Community and Regional
Affairs Committee

State Affairs Committee

Joined Armed Services
Committee

REPRESENTATIVE KY HOLLAND

HB 317 Version A (34-LS0765\N) Sponsor Statement

In many areas of our state, a single road provides the only means of entry and exit for neighborhoods located in, or adjacent to, high wildfire risk areas. In the event of a fire, these routes must accommodate both inbound emergency response and outbound evacuation traffic, where delays can have serious consequences.

Although routine maintenance by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities typically addresses drainage and roadway surface conditions, it can neglect management of dangerous vegetation that can block evacuation or hinder firefighting access.

Thankfully, no fire to date in Alaska has caused fatalities in these limited-access areas. But the 2018 Camp Fire in California illustrated the potential for deadly consequences when communities in wildfire-prone areas are not accessible via well-maintained evacuation routes.

House Bill 317 addresses this risk by creating a prioritization program similar to other DOT&PF maintenance prioritization models and tailored to wildfire risk. The bill directs the department to develop prioritization criteria, consult with local jurisdictions and community stakeholders, and create a prioritized list of state-maintained roads for annual wildfire season preparation and fuel load treatment. The department is further required to report to the legislature on its methodology and resulting prioritization plan.

When a wildfire threatens a neighborhood served by a single access road, that road must remain passable. Emergency vehicles must be able to access the scene of a fire without obstruction. Residents must be able to evacuate swiftly. By establishing a prioritization process for the maintenance of these routes, HB 317 helps the state to integrate wildfire preparedness considerations into routine transportation maintenance planning.

March 4th, 2026