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Sponsor Statement

HB197: Electronic Gaming on AMHS Ferries

House Bill 197 would legalize electronic gaming on the AMHS Ferry System, and on the Alaska Marine Hwy. Currently in Alaska Statute, only pull tabs and bingo are legal forms of gaming. HB197 would legalize additional games to only be played on vessels, and in approved waters.

This bill would generate revenue for our failing ferry system, which has not turned a profit since its inception. Tourist season in the southeast sees upward of 1.5 million people pass through per year, with close to \$800 million dollars spent in our great state. Allowing these tourists, and for the citizens of Alaska, to enjoy gaming on the ferry system, would create revenue, jobs, and opportunities for our state and the people in it.

Other states with similar gaming concepts (i.e. riverboat gaming, gaming on water) have seen massive increases in revenue, which result in additional funding to state's education systems and other important agencies. The ferry system and the Alaska marine highway are currently generating a loss of revenue every calendar year, and House Bill 197 aims to stop that downward trend.