



30th Alaska State Legislature

House Transportation Committee

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House Bill 131 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to relocation assistance for federally assisted public construction and improvement projects and programs; and providing for An effective date."

House Bill 131 would allow an increase of the maximum relocation benefits available to a person or a business displaced by federally-funded highway, bridge, or facilities project. In 2012, Congress relaxed the eligibility criteria and increased the maximum reimbursement limits for states' relocation assistance payment programs when they passed their transportation authorization and funding bill, the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act, aka MAP-21. Prior to MAP-21, the payment rates hadn't been changed for 30 years.

These changes went into effect October 1, 2014. Unfortunately, Alaska Statute continues to reflect the more stringent eligibility criteria and the smaller maximum reimbursement limits.

HB131 will also protect Alaska's approximately \$700 million annual allocation of Federal Highway Administration and Federal Aviation Administration funding by bringing the State into compliance. Having an equivalent state statute is one of the requirements for a state to receive a delegated authority to independently administer the federal program. Additionally, being out of compliance, even for a short period of time, jeopardizes our relationship with our funding partners, putting our entire program at risk.

Further, the bill would provide that a displaced person or business in the state would be retroactively eligible for an increased federal maximum benefit for relocation expenses incurred after October 1, 2014.

In summary, HB131 is a federal compliance bill that protects the State's \$700 million annual allocation and assures Alaskans that their legislature wants them to be compensated the same as a resident of any other state. It is important to compensate Alaskans fairly in those circumstances when the design of a federally-funded highway, bridge, or facilities project requires that the State must acquire private property.

Thank you for your consideration of this legislation.

If you have any questions please contact House Transportation Committee Aide,
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