



# Representative Scott Jiu Wo Kawasaki

Alaska State Legislature

District 9 Fairbanks

## **Sponsor Statement for HB 181 Let There Be Light On Alaska Roads Bill**

House Bill 181 addresses a key goal of the Alaska Highway Safety Office's Strategic Highway Safety Plan. The plan recommends changing state law to require car and truck headlight use at all times. Research shows a decrease in traffic accidents where daytime running lights are used. The Alaska Highway Safety Office has determined enforcements of the headlight law could decrease head-on collisions by 7 percent to 15 percent.

The effectiveness of "headlights on" laws can be seen in Alaska on the Seward Highway. In the mid-1990s, signs were installed along the highway from Anchorage to Seward requiring motor vehicles to have headlights on at all times. The Department of Public Safety and the Department of Transportation acknowledge the effectiveness of the headlight usage with instructional signs in saving lives. According to the Department of Transportation, there was a marked decrease in the number of crashes along the Seward Highway.

Similar results have been seen in other countries located in Polar Regions like Alaska. In Sweden, which has similar climate conditions to Alaska, studies have found that the requirement to use headlights at all times reduced crash rates by 20 percent in urban areas and 17 percent in rural areas in winter months.

Currently, 39 out of 50 states, including Alaska, require use of headlights on motorcycles at all times while operating on roads. Experts report the headlights increase the conspicuousness of motorcycles, allowing other motorists to more easily see them.

House Bill 181 will increase the safety on Alaska's roadways by making all vehicles easier to see while traveling, especially during Alaska's long periods of dusk and dawn. Please join me in supporting House Bill 181 and help make Alaska a safer place to drive.