

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Member

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## **Representative Mike Kelly**

*House District 7*

### SPONSOR STATEMENT – HB 267

#### Dalton Highway Access Bill

Since 1980, state law has prohibited virtually all off-road vehicle use within five miles of the Dalton Highway north of the Yukon River. Miners and oil workers are allowed to cross the corridor for business use and local resident snowmachine use is permitted. HB 267 simply ends the longstanding prohibition on Alaskans' right to travel by snowmachine on this public land corridor north of the Yukon River. Many Alaskans believe that travel by snowmachine in the Dalton Corridor is prevented by federal law. Wrong. The problem is state law.

A February 20, 2010 *Fairbanks Daily News Miner* editorial stated (excerpt):

*Some argue that the state must prohibit snowmachines in the corridor to protect wildlife from renegade hunters. If this is a reasonable argument, shouldn't the state apply the same five-mile buffer to the rest of its remote road system? Most of our highways traverse lightly populated areas where law enforcement is spotty.*

*The Dalton Highway is more remote, yes, but that actually argues against more stringent regulation. Its remoteness, lack of services and unpaved surface discourage most Alaskans from venturing up it – fewer people, fewer enforcement problems.*

*The blanket prohibition north of the Yukon River is overkill.*

HB 267 will allow snowmachine use on the Dalton highway corridor from Oct. 1 to April 30 when soil is frozen and snow covered. The resulting impact on surface vegetation should be minimal. If HB 267 passes, the prohibition on other off-road vehicles would remain. This bill simply offers Alaskans access by snowmachine during the winter months to public lands from a public highway.