

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 19

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE HOUSE LABOR AND COMMERCE COMMITTEE

Introduced: 4/28/21

Referred: Labor and Commerce

A RESOLUTION

1 **Supporting widespread infrastructure investment in the state.**

2 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

3 **WHEREAS** improving the state's transportation, energy, and technological
4 foundations is a key goal of the comprehensive economic development strategy of the state;
5 and

6 **WHEREAS** the state received a grade of C- when last reviewed by the American
7 Society of Civil Engineers in 2017; and

8 **WHEREAS** the 2019 Alaska Broadband Task Force Plan identified the expansion of
9 broadband infrastructure as critical to meeting the ever-increasing demand for bandwidth to
10 support innovations in commerce, education, and health care, among other sectors of the
11 state's economy; and

12 **WHEREAS** the deployment of broadband and low earth orbit satellites is critical to
13 the state's comprehensive economic development strategy, because many communities in the
14 state lack adequate access to the Internet; and

15 **WHEREAS** the state has an estimated backlog of deferred maintenance at state
16 facilities of over \$2,000,000,000; and

1 **WHEREAS** the University of Alaska has a separate deferred maintenance backlog of
2 \$1,300,000,000; and

3 **WHEREAS** some communities in the state do not have centralized water or
4 wastewater systems, requiring residents to haul water from rivers and lakes and use "honey
5 buckets" for disposal of solid waste; and

6 **WHEREAS** addressing all clean water and sanitation needs in communities in the
7 state would require an investment of nearly \$2,200,000,000; and

8 **WHEREAS** residents and businesses in many areas of the state endure extremely high
9 electric and heating costs; and

10 **WHEREAS** the state's abundant renewable energy resources have the potential to
11 reduce energy costs but require an upfront investment before these resources can produce
12 clean energy for decades to come; and

13 **WHEREAS** affordable housing shortages persist throughout all corners of the state,
14 affecting the viability of rural communities and the ability of businesses and governments to
15 hire locally; and

16 **WHEREAS** the state needs approximately 16,000 affordable homes, at an estimated
17 cost of \$7,000,000,000, to alleviate overcrowding across the state; and

18 **WHEREAS** the Port of Alaska moves goods consumed by 90 percent of the state's
19 population and serves as a critical strategic asset for military readiness; and

20 **WHEREAS** the Port of Alaska needs significant investment to complete an ongoing
21 modernization project in an active seismic zone; and

22 **WHEREAS** the Alaska marine highway system has an aging fleet of vessels that
23 require replacement and repair to ensure the continued viability of this unique form of public
24 transit; and

25 **WHEREAS** the need for infrastructure investment across the state far outpaces the
26 state's ability to directly fund these needs; and

27 **WHEREAS** several funding mechanisms, including the Denali Commission, the
28 renewable energy grant fund, the Alaska marine highway system vessel replacement fund, the
29 Alaska microloan revolving loan fund, and many others established by state and federal law,
30 are already in place to capitalize infrastructure needs in the state; and

31 **WHEREAS** the President of the United States and the United States Congress are

1 currently working toward a meaningful legislative package with investments in areas of new
2 and existing infrastructure, power and renewable energy, housing, transit, and building
3 retrofits;

4 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports widespread
5 infrastructure investment in the state.

6 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Joseph R. Biden, President
7 of the United States; the Honorable Kamala D. Harris, Vice President of the United States and
8 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the U.S. House of
9 Representatives; the Honorable Mitch McConnell, Minority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the
10 Honorable Kevin McCarthy, Minority Leader of the U.S. House of Representatives; and the
11 Honorable Charles Schumer, Majority Leader of the U.S.; the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and
12 the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young, U.S.
13 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.