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REPRESENTATIVE MIKE CRONK

Sponsor Statement for HJR 35

"Supporting the completion of the Northern Rail Extension; supporting the increase in defense capabilities at Fort Greely, Alaska; and encouraging the development of critical Arctic Infrastructure."

Completing the Northern Rail Extension to Fort Greely and Delta Junction would support Military operations, mining, and agriculture in the Interior of Alaska.

There is a long history with the railroad, dating back to 1914 when Congress authorized the construction of a railroad in Alaska. Finally, in 2013, almost one hundred years later, the Northern rail expansion was proposed by Alaska Railroad in conjunction with the Department of Defense, the four phased plan was completed. Phase one, Crossing the Tanana River, was completed. The remaining three phases need to be accomplished before we can realize completion of the Northern rail expansion.

With the continued expansion of the Fort Greely missile complex and expanded training ranges, agriculture in Delta Junction, and increased mining operations in the area the railroad is more important than ever. This resolution supports the critical infrastructure development, national security, economic development, and natural resource development in the State of Alaska.

The Northern Rail Extension project would provide essential freight and passenger service to support transportation and mobility needs of the region. This is a project long overdue for Alaska and I ask for your support for this resolution.

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