

CS FOR SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 15(FIN)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered: 3/13/97

Referred: Rules

Sponsor(s): SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

A RESOLUTION

**1 Relating to reauthorization of the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation
2 Efficiency Act of 1991.**

3 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

4 WHEREAS the federal Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
5 (ISTEA) substantially revamped the federal-aid highway program and the federal
6 transportation program; and

7 WHEREAS ISTEA gave more flexibility to state and local governments to apply
8 innovative solutions to the transportation problems that they face; and

9 WHEREAS ISTEA has shifted the focus of the federal surface transportation program
**10 toward preservation of highway and transit systems, increased efficiency of existing
11 transportation networks, and integration of transportation modes to enhance efficiency of the
12 transportation system; and**

13 WHEREAS the states and regional and local governments have invested time and
**14 energy in making ISTEA work and this investment should not be lost by significantly altering
15 the programs initiated by ISTEA; and**

16 WHEREAS the ISTEA programs can be strengthened by allowing greater flexibility

1 between programs and within programs, by allowing greater flexibility to address maintenance
2 needs, by reducing time-consuming federal reviews, mandates, and sanctions, and by allowing
3 self-certification at the state level; and

4 **WHEREAS** the Federal Highway Administration has adopted a regulation requiring
5 that a major investment study be undertaken by metropolitan planning organizations whenever
6 the need for a major metropolitan transportation investment is identified; and

7 **WHEREAS** the major investment study requirement overlaps and duplicates planning
8 and project development processes that are already in place under requirements for long-range
9 planning and congestion management systems; and

10 **WHEREAS** Congress should retain the critical role of the federal government to help
11 fund highway, bridge, ferry, and transit projects and to focus the national transportation policy
12 on mobility, connectivity, integrity, safety, and economic competitiveness; and

13 **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska receives money under ISTEA for construction and
14 improvement of roads, highways, and the marine highway system and for bridge replacement
15 and rehabilitation, state and metropolitan transportation planning, transit programs, highway
16 safety programs, and enforcement of truck and bus safety requirements; and

17 **WHEREAS** the state also receives assistance under ISTEA for transportation projects
18 to alleviate air pollution in two areas of the state where air quality does not meet national
19 ambient air quality standards; and

20 **WHEREAS** 4,300 miles, or about 32 percent of the total mileage, of roads in the state
21 are eligible for federal assistance under ISTEA; and

22 **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska has relied heavily on federal assistance to support
23 construction and improvement of the surface transportation system in the state; and

24 **WHEREAS** continued federal assistance is essential to the establishment of the surface
25 transportation system in the state; and

26 **WHEREAS** the existing surface transportation system in Alaska needs significant
27 repair and maintenance in order to remain a safe and efficient system; and

28 **WHEREAS** surface transportation in Alaska is subject to extreme Arctic and sub-
29 Arctic climate and soil conditions; and

30 **WHEREAS** the State of Alaska cannot maintain or expand the surface transportation
31 system in Alaska without continued federal assistance; and

1 **WHEREAS** the funding authorizations for federal assistance and transportation
2 programs under ISTEA will expire September 30, 1997;

3 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
4 Congress to reauthorize the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991
5 (ISTEA) as soon as possible; and be it

6 **FURTHER RESOLVED** the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
7 Congress to authorize increased funding for surface transportation projects under ISTEA, if
8 possible, but, in any case, to maintain the current levels of funding available under ISTEA;
9 and be it

10 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
11 Congress to allow for a portion of the enhancement set aside funds to be used to maintain or
12 improve pioneer access trails and historical roadways; and be it

13 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
14 Congress to allow for a portion of the enhancement set aside funds to be used to maintain
15 trails and other facilities that are constructed under that program; and be it

16 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
17 Congress to authorize greater use of ISTEA funds for maintenance and repair of existing roads
18 and highways; and be it

19 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
20 Congress to eliminate the requirement for major investment studies under 23 C.F.R. 450.318
21 as part of the reauthorization of ISTEA; and be it

22 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests the
23 Congress to authorize greater flexibility in the construction of low volume roads suited to
24 Alaska's remoteness and sub-Arctic and Arctic environment.

25 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Al Gore, Jr., Vice-President
26 of the United States and President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Newt Gingrich, Speaker
27 of the U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable John McCain, Chair, Committee on
28 Commerce, Science, and Transportation, U.S. Senate; and the Honorable Bud Shuster, Chair,
29 Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure, U.S. House of Representatives; the Honorable
30 Rodney E. Slater, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation; and to the Honorable Ted
31 Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young,

- 1 U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.