

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
**SENATE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE**  
Anchorage, Alaska  
February 23, 2001  
1:35 p.m.

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

Presentation: Alaska's Future Transportation Needs

**TAPES**

01-6, SIDES A & B

01-7, SIDES A & B

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman John Cowdery called the Senate Transportation Committee meeting order to at 1:30 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Committee members present were Senators John Cowdery, Jerry Ward, Robin Taylor, Gary Wilken, Kim Elton. Senators Loren Leman, Dave Donley, and Representatives Hugh Fate and Vic Kohring were also present.

**SUMMARY OF INFORMATION**

Chairman Cowdery reminded attendees that the purpose of this meeting was to take a serious look at Alaska's transportation needs over the next 15 to 20 years. Leaders from Alaska's engineering and transportation community were invited to present. He pointed out that state officials were not invited to present; his goal is to hear from the professional engineering community. He further stated that the meeting was being videotaped and that he would be taking copies of the tapes back to Washington, D.C. next week. He urged presenters to be candid, realizing that many consult and contract with the state. He scheduled this meeting for the purpose of bringing forth ideas and projects from the best minds and with the best interest of the State of Alaska in mind.

[Highlights of the presentations follow.]

**PRESENTATIONS**

MR. BILL ROBERTSON, R & M Consultants

Highlights:

- Major bottleneck in Anchorage on the Glenn and Seward Highways. These need to be corrected. They will be very expensive due to right of way and utility relocations
- Alaska needs to build some "Big" projects:
  - North South Corridor Hillside to Muldoon
  - Potters Creek that the Hillside

Mr. Robertson also talked about Alaska's ports and harbors. Presently we are giving ports back to the local communities. There is no federal funding and these facilities are degrading.

- The Port of Anchorage is very important to the state as most cargo destined to Alaska flows through the port
- Alaska needs to pay attention to Alaska's 400 smaller airports. They are the lifeline to rural Alaska. Not enough funding comes from the FAA each year.
- The work load generated by the STIP should be made consistent so there would be an even number of projects each year instead of large peaks and valleys.

MR. TED TRUEBLOOD, Tryck Nyman & Hayes

Highlights:

- Planned to speak to rail and ports
- Alaska needs to improve the commuter use of the Alaska Railroad from the Wasilla area to Anchorage
- Large rail projects should also be considered;
  - Extend the Alaska Railroad to Canada
  - Extend the railroad to Northwest Alaska
  - A spur line needs to be built from Healy to Wonder Lake in Denali Park
- There is a major need to improve local ports – most with no road access
- Major expansion is needed at the Port of Anchorage. This expansion would build another dock capable of handling the large ship now under construction and future cruise line visits

RICK SMITH, VECO and DENNIS NOTTINGHAM, Peratrovich, Nottingham & Drage

Highlights:

- Knik Arm Crossing
- Fire Island
- Denali Park Access
- Copper River Highway
- Whittier Small Boat Harbor Expansion
- Nottingham, stressed his 40 years of experience as an Alaskan engineer and indicated that we do not build roads we concentrate on city streets
- He stated that the 12,000 ft. Knik Arm crossing could be built for approximately \$300 million dollars and that it would only take 20 engineers to design the project

STEWART OSGOOD, DOWL Engineers

Highlights:

- Recreation access has been very positive
- Alaska needs access to gravel sources in rural Alaska
- Gambell street in Anchorage from 20th to 5th should be re-built underground

There's a need for coordinated regional planning

JOHN AHO, CH2M Hill

Highlights:

- Reported on his firms work on the NW Alaska Transportation Study
- The NW Study is looking at developing transportation corridors from mineral rich areas to the western coast of Alaska or east to the existing road system
- 150 previous studies have been reviewed

They are looking for projects that can be built

FRANK DILLON, Alaska Truckers Association

Highlights:

SENATE TRA COMMITTEE

- There is a problem with the process
- There is no real active voice for truckers
- There is a need to build roads that can handle the loads
- Need to modify the STIP and speed up the process

Budget cycles need to be clearer and more concise

He also stressed that Alaska should establish a road commission