

CS FOR SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 1(STA)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-THIRD LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE STATE AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Offered: 2/12/03

Referred: Transportation, Finance

Sponsor(s): SENATORS WILKEN, Therriault, Seekins

A RESOLUTION

1 **Relating to economic development generated by new road construction and to the design**
2 **and construction of the Hot Springs Loop Road to connect Chena Hot Springs and**
3 **Circle Hot Springs, of a highway along the Bradfield/Iskut Rivers transportation**
4 **corridor, of the Knik Arm Crossing, and of a road from Iliamna Bay to Pile Bay.**

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

6 **WHEREAS** new roads are needed to connect communities with the resources that
7 create the increased potential for commercial, industrial, recreational, and social activities for
8 residents and visitors; and

9 **WHEREAS** new local roads will allow Alaskans to get to local schools and health
10 facilities and to quickly respond to local emergency situations; and

11 **WHEREAS** improving the transportation infrastructure in Alaska is vital to the
12 economic growth and prosperity of the state; and

13 **WHEREAS** Alaska is the largest state in the Union, comprising one-fifth of the total
14 area of the continental United States, yet Alaska has barely 2,000 miles of roadways, less than
15 the state of Vermont; and

16 **WHEREAS** the proposed Hot Springs Loop Road from Chena Hot Springs to Circle

1 Hot Springs will complete a transportation loop connecting Fairbanks and the two resort areas
2 and will open areas of Interior Alaska for residents and visitors to explore, enjoy, and
3 develop; and

4 **WHEREAS** the Hot Springs Loop Road would connect the Steese Highway with the
5 Chena Hot Springs Road either through or around the Steese National Conservation Area; and

6 **WHEREAS** the Hot Springs Loop Road will allow residents and tourists an
7 opportunity to drive the scenic loop between Fairbanks and the resort areas at Chena Hot
8 Springs and Circle Hot Springs; and

9 **WHEREAS** the Hot Springs Loop Road will foster increased outdoor activities, new
10 tourism ventures, and economic growth in Interior Alaska; and

11 **WHEREAS** construction of a highway along the Bradfield/Iskut Rivers transportation
12 corridor would increase the traffic flow between Southeast Alaska and the Alaska marine
13 highway to British Columbia by permitting a more efficient flow of travelers into and out of
14 the region; and

15 **WHEREAS** a transportation corridor between Southeast Alaska and British Columbia
16 would generate recreational growth benefiting Alaskans and British Columbians; and

17 **WHEREAS** communities in southern Southeast Alaska have suffered immense and
18 catastrophic declines in their economic base due to removal of the timber industry as a key
19 component of their economies by the previous national administration; and

20 **WHEREAS** the Alaska marine highway system is placing severe constraints on the
21 shipment of fresh seafood to United States and Canadian markets because it has a policy to
22 maximize revenue in the summer period at the expense of reserved deck space for fresh
23 seafood containers, because the capacity to transport shipping vans has been severely
24 curtailed due to international SOLAS shipping standard requirements, and because the Prince
25 Rupert transfer bridge is not of sufficient weight carrying capacity; and

26 **WHEREAS** the shipment of fresh seafood, both caught and processed domestically,
27 by way of airlines is both capacity constrained and expensive, thus denying efficiencies and
28 potential markets for high margin fresh seafood products; and

29 **WHEREAS** a land transportation link to the North American highway system could
30 provide viable development of new vocations resulting from new economic growth; and

31 **WHEREAS** the southern region of Southeast Alaska has been negatively affected in

1 recent years with individual fishery quota (IFQ) landings moving to road-connected
2 communities such as Haines and Prince Rupert; and

3 **WHEREAS** the people of southern Southeast Alaska wish to increase trade with our
4 Canadian neighbors; and

5 **WHEREAS** the Knik Arm Crossing project has been identified as a project that
6 would have a profound effect on future development in Southcentral Alaska; and

7 **WHEREAS** construction of a road from Iliamna Bay to Pile Bay on Lake Iliamna will
8 provide a greatly enhanced transportation route to Lake Iliamna, Newhalen, Lake Clark, the
9 upper Bristol Bay area, several mineral deposits, and unparalleled recreational opportunities
10 and will provide for more economical transportation of food, fuel, and materials to the several
11 villages in the area;

12 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes that the economic
13 development activity generated by the construction of new roads is important to the growth
14 and prosperity of the state; and be it

15 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the design and
16 construction of the Hot Springs Loop Road to provide a scenic loop route to connect
17 Fairbanks and the resort areas at Chena Hot Springs and Circle Hot Springs; and be it

18 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the efforts of
19 Governor Frank Murkowski and the City of Wrangell to continue their work with the
20 Province of British Columbia, and Cassiar and Yellowhead Highways communities in their
21 efforts to reach an agreement to construct a highway along the Bradfield/Iskut Rivers
22 transportation corridor; and be it

23 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the pre-National
24 Environmental Policy Act scoping and environmental impact statement process and the
25 design and construction of a highway along the Bradfield/Iskut Rivers transportation corridor
26 to connect southern Southeast Alaska to British Columbia; and be it

27 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the design and
28 construction of the Knik Arm Crossing and a road from Iliamna Bay to Pile Bay.