

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 38

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE

Introduced: 3/29/06

Referred: Transportation, Finance

A RESOLUTION

1 **Urging the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities to use the Alaska marine**
2 **highway system fast ferries efficiently by deploying the fast ferries in northern Lynn**
3 **Canal and Prince William Sound beginning in the summer of 2006, and to provide data**
4 **regularly to the affected communities to enable the communities to evaluate the service**
5 **effectively.**

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

7 **WHEREAS** the Southeast Alaska region is coastal in nature, and the economies have
8 evolved around and depend on reliable and predictable patterns of marine transportation; and

9 **WHEREAS** state ferries deliver people, food, health care, supplies, and equipment to
10 coastal communities throughout the state, with economic effects far beyond the area in which
11 they operate; and

12 **WHEREAS** failure to establish and publish baseline schedules at least two years in
13 advance for all Alaska marine highway system routes reduces ridership and complicates
14 connections within the system and with other modes of transportation; and

15 **WHEREAS** inconsistent planning and sudden changes to schedules have caused

1 negative economic effects on communities and their businesses; and

2 **WHEREAS** fast vehicle ferries were designed and deployed to upgrade the aging
3 Alaska marine highway system fleet and to supplement the level of service by providing fast,
4 efficient, and reliable transportation on point-to-point service runs to better meet local
5 demand; and

6 **WHEREAS** local communities best understand their transportation needs and have a
7 vested interest in developing local control over long-range strategies;

8 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Department of
9 Transportation and Public Facilities to

10 (1) commit, on a year-round basis, a fast vehicle ferry to northern Lynn Canal
11 servicing Juneau, Haines, Skagway, and Sitka;

12 (2) return, on a year-round basis, a fast vehicle ferry to Prince William Sound
13 servicing Cordova, Valdez, and Whittier;

14 (3) effective October 2006, develop a schedule for these vessels that remains
15 unchanged for two years, to determine the true demand and economic feasibility of the fast
16 ferries in those respective regions; and

17 (4) provide mayors of the affected communities with relevant data on a
18 quarterly basis to assist the communities with evaluation of the following:

19 (A) optimum scheduling and route selection;

20 (B) revenue maximization and operating costs;

21 (C) passenger satisfaction;

22 (D) overall profitability and efficiency of moving people and goods;

23 and

24 (E) feasibility of development of local ferry authorities.