

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 9, 2012

1:05 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Albert Kookesh, Chair  
Senator Joe Thomas, Vice Chair  
Senator Linda Menard  
Senator Charlie Huggins

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Dennis Egan

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTE FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 131(TRA) AM  
"An Act establishing the Alaska Community and Public  
Transportation Advisory Board and relating to a long-range  
community and public transportation plan; and providing for an  
effective date."

- MOVED CSHB 131(TRA)am OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HB 131

SHORT TITLE: COMMUNITY AND TRANSPORTATION ADV. BOARD

SPONSOR(S): REPRESENTATIVE(S) MUNOZ

01/28/11	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/28/11	(H)	TRA, FIN
03/15/11	(H)	TRA AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 17
03/15/11	(H)	Heard & Held
03/15/11	(H)	MINUTE(TRA)
03/22/11	(H)	TRA AT 1:00 PM CAPITOL 17
03/22/11	(H)	Moved CSHB 131(TRA) Out of Committee
03/22/11	(H)	MINUTE(TRA)
03/23/11	(H)	TRA RPT CS(TRA) 4DP 3NR
03/23/11	(H)	DP: MUNOZ, PETERSEN, GRUENBERG, P.WILSON
03/23/11	(H)	NR: JOHNSON, FEIGE, PRUITT
04/14/11	(H)	FIN RPT CS(TRA) 10DP
04/14/11	(H)	DP: GUTTENBERG, T.WILSON, GARA, JOULE, NEUMAN, COSTELLO, EDGMON, DOOGAN,

04/14/11 (H) STOLTZE, THOMAS  
 04/14/11 (H) FIN AT 8:30 AM HOUSE FINANCE 519  
 04/14/11 (H) Moved CSHB 131(TRA) Out of Committee  
 04/14/11 (H) MINUTE(FIN)  
 04/14/11 (H) FIN AT 1:30 PM HOUSE FINANCE 519  
 04/14/11 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
 01/27/12 (H) TRANSMITTED TO (S)  
 01/27/12 (H) VERSION: CSHB 131(TRA) AM  
 01/30/12 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
 01/30/12 (S) TRA, CRA  
 02/09/12 (S) TRA AT 1:00 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

REPRESENTATIVE CATHY MUNOZ  
 Alaska State Legislature  
 Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** sponsor of HB 131.

JEFF OTTESEN, Director  
 Program Development  
 Department of Transportation and Public Facilities  
 Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Provided information related to HB 131.

CAMILLE FERGUSON  
 Alaska Mobility Coalition

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 131.

JENNIFER BECKMANN  
 Alaska Mobility Coalition

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 131.

MARIE DARLIN  
 AARP  
 Juneau, AK

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HB 131.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

1:05:52 PM

**CHAIR ALBERT KOOKESH** called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:05 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Huggins, Menard, and Chair Kookesh.

**HB 131-COMMUNITY AND TRANSPORTATION ADV. BOARD**

[1:06:02 PM](#)

CHAIR KOOKESH announced the consideration of HB 131, An Act establishing the Alaska Community and Public Transportation Advisory Board and relating to a long-range community and public transportation plan; and providing for an effective date. [CSHB 131(TRA)am, 27-LS0418\B.A, was before the committee.]

[1:06:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE CATHY MUNOZ, sponsor of HB 131, stated that the bill will give a voice to seniors and people with disabilities in transportation planning. It creates a community and transportation advisory board to help state, federal, and local agencies that provide community-based transportation services. She noted that about 50 federally-funded programs send money into Alaska for transportation programs.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ stated that public and community transportation connects a community and supports development. Transportation services in the Juneau community are provided by Capital Transit, Southeast Alaskans Independent Living (SAIL), and Care-A-Van. She highlighted the importance of coordinating the efforts of the various transportation organizations to avoid duplication, provide better service, save money, and be more efficient.

Organizations that have stated support for HB 131 include the Alaska Mobility Coalition, the Governor's Council on Disabilities and Special Education, the Advisory Board on Alcoholism and Drug Abuse, the Alaska Commission on Aging, the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority, the Alaska Brain Injury Network, the Alaska Suicide Prevention Council, and the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP).

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ shared a story to illustrate the need, and concluded that the advisory board will work to find solutions to maintain and better the public transportation in Alaska.

[1:07:56 PM](#)

SENATOR THOMAS joined the meeting.

SENATOR MENARD asked what the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force had achieved.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ responded that this was a new effort that specifically recommends establishing a board to provide input

into the transportation process for the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF). She suggested the committee consider extending the 2016 sunset to match the five-year federal highway reauthorization that is currently under debate in Congress.

SENATOR MENARD asked if consideration was given to hiring professional staff to help the advisory board.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ replied the current DOTPF staff will be able to accommodate this effort.

1:11:06 PM

SENATOR HUGGINS stated support for HB 131.

SENATOR MENARD asked if the Governor supported the bill.

REPRESENTATIVE MUNOZ replied she didn't want to speak for the Governor, but a representative from DOTPF was available.

1:11:55 PM

JEFF OTTESEN, Director, Program Development, Department of Transportation and Public Facilities (DOTPF), said he was also chair of the Governor's Coordinated Transportation Task Force. Speaking in that capacity, he said he wanted to point out three things - the need, the money involved, and why coordination is important.

The task force and the consultant's effort determined that 11 percent of Alaskans are in need of coordinated transportation. That represents 80,000 people and the number is growing. Alaska's senior population is growing faster than any other state and the percent of veterans is also the highest of any state. Some are returning with disabilities so they too are part of this audience.

At least \$80 million has been identified as being at stake. If that money can be used more efficiently and effectively it will ultimately result in a lower cost service that is delivered in a better way.

MR. OTTESEN said money flows to the state in many different federal programs and DOTPF in turn passes the money down to local agencies and nonprofits that are delivering the services. However, it's fairly difficult to get coordination when the matrix is so large and includes federal, state and local agencies as well as local nonprofit and tribal organizations.

DOTPF has made some progress in the past 12 years but what's needed is "some way to nudge all these different organizations to pull the oar on the same beat in the same direction."

CHAIR KOOKESH opened public testimony.

[1:15:23 PM](#)

JENNIFER BECKMANN, Alaska Mobility Coalition, said she was also the executive director of a nonprofit that provides public transportation in the central Kenai Peninsula and served on the Governors Coordinated Transportation Task Force. She stated that the money currently spent on transportation in this state could be spent more effectively with coordination.

CAMILLE FERGUSON, Alaska Mobility Coalition, said she was pleased to have served on the Governors Coordinated Transportation Task Force and as a result of that work she and the other members could see the value of coordination. There is \$80 million worth of transportation in the state yet there are unmet needs, largely due to the inefficiencies of coordination.

SENATOR MENARD asked what would be the first task this advisory board would tackle.

MS. BECKMAN replied she believes it would be to open the lines of communication between all the departments within the state that receive federal transportation funds.

[1:18:27 PM](#)

MARIE DARLIN, AARP, noted that the packets should contain the letter of support that AARP submitted last year. She stated that when both AARP and the Commission on Aging meet in different locations statewide, transportation is one the biggest concerns because there is no coordination. Juneau has a well-coordinated transportation system, but this is not common in other areas. HB 131 provides an opportunity for all areas to look at coordination and how to better serve residents. It's a statewide concern.

[1:20:06 PM](#)

CHAIR KOOKESH introduced Sophie Clark. She is from Craig and a junior in high school.

CHAIR KOOKESH closed public testimony. Finding no discussion he stated his desire to move the bill and asked for a motion.

[1:20:49 PM](#)

SENATOR MENARD moved to report CS for HB 131 from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

CHAIR KOOKESH announced that without objection CSHB 131(TRA)am moved from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

1:21:08 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair French adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee hearing at 1:21 p.m.