

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE  
HOUSE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE**

April 30, 2024

1:03 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Representative Kevin McCabe, Chair  
Representative Tom McKay  
Representative Craig Johnson  
Representative Jesse Sumner  
Representative Louise Stutes  
Representative Genevieve Mina

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Representative Sarah Vance, Vice Chair

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 141(TRA)

"An Act naming the Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge."

- MOVED CSSB 141(TRA) OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SB 141

SHORT TITLE: NAMING RAYMOND & ESTHER CONQUEST BRIDGE

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) HOFFMAN

05/01/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/01/23	(S)	TRA, FIN
05/11/23	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
05/11/23	(S)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
01/23/24	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
01/23/24	(S)	Heard & Held
01/23/24	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
01/25/24	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
01/25/24	(S)	Moved CSSB 141(TRA) Out of Committee
01/25/24	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
01/26/24	(S)	TRA RPT CS 4DP 1NR SAME TITLE
01/26/24	(S)	DP: KAUFMAN, MYERS, TOBIN, KIEHL
01/26/24	(S)	NR: WILSON
02/07/24	(S)	FIN AT 9:00 AM SENATE FINANCE 532
02/07/24	(S)	Heard & Held
02/07/24	(S)	MINUTE(FIN)

02/15/24 (S) FIN AT 1:30 PM SENATE FINANCE 532  
02/15/24 (S) Moved CSSB 141(TRA) Out of Committee  
02/15/24 (S) MINUTE(FIN)  
02/19/24 (S) FIN RPT CS(TRA) 4DP  
02/19/24 (S) DP: HOFFMAN, OLSON, KIEHL, BISHOP  
02/21/24 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)  
02/21/24 (S) VERSION: CSSB 141(TRA)  
02/22/24 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
02/22/24 (H) TRA, FIN  
03/21/24 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124  
03/21/24 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
04/25/24 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124  
04/25/24 (H) <Bill Hearing Canceled>  
04/30/24 (H) TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124

#### **WITNESS REGISTER**

SAM GREELEY, Staff  
Senator Lyman Hoffman  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Presented CSSB 141(TRA) on behalf of  
Senator Hoffman, prime sponsor.

#### **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:03:19 PM](#)

**CHAIR KEVIN MCCABE** called the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:03 p.m. Representatives C. Johnson, McKay, Stutes, Sumner, and McCabe were present at the call to order. Representative Mina arrived as the meeting was in progress.

#### **SB 141-NAMING RAYMOND & ESTHER CONQUEST BRIDGE**

[1:03:53 PM](#)

CHAIR MCCABE announced that the only order of business would be CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 141(TRA), "An Act naming the Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge."

[1:04:50 PM](#)

SAM GREELEY, Staff, Senator Lyman Hoffman, Alaska State Legislature, presented CSSB 141(TRA) on behalf of Senator Hoffman, prime sponsor. He paraphrased the sponsor statement

[included in the committee packet], which read as follows  
[original punctuation provided]:

Senate Bill 141 renames Bridge 1902, the Aleknagik Wood River Bridge to the Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge.

On March 22 2023, the Aleknagik City Council and the Aleknagik Traditional council adopted a joint resolution 23-02, requesting the Legislature change the name of the Wood River Bridge to the Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge.

Raymond Conquest was born in a little village called Apqa, in the Bethel region. His mother passed when he was a young child. He was raised by an elderly couple and later ended up in the Catholic orphanage at Holy Cross. He ran away at the age of 11 and at age 13 or 14, caught a steamship from Bethel to Dillingham. Raymond was a hard worker and lived in a one-room shack with friends. Later, Raymond was employed as a heavy equipment operator for the State of Alaska Department of Transportation and Building Facilities, building a State highway from Dillingham to Aleknagik named the Lake Aleknagik Road. The highway is better known as the Gateway to Wood Tikchik State Park.

Raymond later worked as a caretaker at the Nerka Lodge known as the Second Lake. During that time, he met his wife Esther, who would assist him with caretaking the lodge. Raymond's next venture was in commercial fishing. He purchased the "Ricky T" and shortly after purchase a second boat the "Gypsy". Raymond and Esther would fish full seasons starting in Nushagak and Kwichak, and would later in season transfer to Togiak. Raymond was also an avid hunter and trapper, after the fishing season the two would hunt for moose. In the spring Raymond would snare squirrels. Esther was famous for her parkas and dolls. She was well known in the Bristol Bay Region for her craft.

Esther and Raymond showed kindness and generosity to all. They are remembered for transporting hundreds of people back and forth from Aleknagik to Dillingham. If there was an emergency, it was always the Conquests taking people to the hospital any time of day or night. In the tragic case of a loss of life, the

Conquests were there to comfort people and buy groceries for them for weeks in times of need. Raymond was instrumental and played a very big part in getting the Aleknagik Wood River Bridge complete in October 2015. Raymond was quoted as saying "I will fight for that bridge until I die". During the City of Aleknagik 2015 Bridge Ceremony, Raymond was honored by being the first one to cross the bridge in his old blue Chevy truck. Raymond and Esther's presence forever shaped the community of Aleknagik.

Please join me in supporting Senate Bill 141, naming the Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge.

[1:07:53 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES referenced an unsigned resolution from the city council and tribe. She further noted a letter of opposition to the bridge from the same tribe members and inquired whether there was a "split" in the community.

MR. GREELEY replied that he did not have full details on why the resolution was not signed. He had the minutes from the meeting, he said, and the resolution was unanimously adopted. He added that he could provide more details to the committee upon further research.

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES asked what relationship Raymond Conquest had with Senator Hoffman.

MR. GREELEY responded that he believed Raymond was a cousin but would get back to the committee when he could confirm.

[1:09:47 PM](#)

CHAIR MCCABE opened public testimony on CSSB 141(TRA). After ascertaining no one wished to testify, he closed public testimony.

[1:10:33 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES observed that the tribe members who sent the letter of opposition were absent from the meeting when the unanimous passage of the resolution occurred. She reiterated that there must be "some issue."

MR. GREELEY stated that he could not comment on or clarify that, but he would try and identify the concern.

CHAIR MCCABE commented that the mayor was at the joint council meeting at the local school, and he was part of the unanimous approval of the resolution.

[1:12:58 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MINA offered clarity regarding the signatures on the original resolution.

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES referred to the contents in the committee packet and pointed out the unsigned resolution. She rephrased her concern about a possible issue being that some community members were not present for the signing.

[1:14:04 PM](#)

The committee took an at-ease from 1:14 p.m. to 1:15 p.m.

[1:15:30 PM](#)

CHAIR MCCABE asked for the will of the committee and suggested figuring out the disparity between the letter of opposition and the resolution.

[1:16:38 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES wished to have the bill held and resolved before advancing it.

[1:17:11 PM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE MCKAY moved to report CSSB 141(TRA) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes.

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES objected.

A roll call vote was taken. Representatives Sumner, C. Johnson, McKay, and McCabe voted in favor the motion to report CSSB 141(TRA) out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying fiscal notes. Representatives Mina and Stutes voted against it. Therefore, CSSB 141(TRA) was reported out of the House Transportation Standing Committee by a vote of 4-2.

1:18:52 PM

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES questioned the zero fiscal note and asked why the bill was going to House Finance Committee.

CHAIR MCCABE noted that there was an attached fiscal note.

1:19:29 PM

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business before the committee, the House Transportation Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 1:19 p.m.