

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
SENATE TRANSPORTATION STANDING COMMITTEE

January 23, 2024

1:32 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Senator James Kaufman, Chair
Senator Löki Tobin
Senator Robert Myers

MEMBERS ABSENT

Senator David Wilson, Vice Chair
Senator Jesse Kiehl

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 141

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

- HEARD & HELD

SENATE BILL NO. 129

"An Act naming the Matt Glover Bike Path."

- MOVED SB 129 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

BILL: SB 129

SHORT TITLE: MATT GLOVER BIKE PATH

SPONSOR(S): SENATOR(S) MYERS

04/14/23	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
04/14/23	(S)	TRA

05/04/23 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
05/04/23 (S) Heard & Held
05/04/23 (S) MINUTE(TRA)
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

WITNESS REGISTER

EMMA TORKELSON, Staff,
Senator James Kaufman
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Explained the summary of changes for SB 141.

SAM GREELY, Staff
Senator Hoffman
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Read the sectional analysis and sponsor statement for SB 141.

SENATOR ROBERT MYERS, District Q
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Sponsor of SB 129.

ANDY MILLS, Legislative Liaison
Department of Transportation (DOT)
Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions on SB 129.

CELIA STAPLES, representing self
Family Relation to Matt Glover
Kansas

POSITION STATEMENT: Testified in support of SB 129.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[1:32:23 PM](#)

CHAIR JAMES KAUFMAN called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:32 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Tobin, Myers, and Chair Kaufman.

SB 141-NAMING RAYMOND & ESTHER CONQUEST BRIDGE

[1:33:09 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 141 "An Act naming the Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge."

[1:33:32 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN announced that members will begin by taking up a CS for SB 141 for a minor technical clerical change.

[1:33:40 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN solicited a motion.

[1:33:45 PM](#)

SENATOR MYERS moved to adopt the committee substitute for SB 141, work order 33-LS0717\B, as the working document.

[1:33:58 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN objected for purposes of discussion.

[1:34:08 PM](#)

EMMA TORKELSON, Transportation Committee Aide, Senator James Kaufman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, explained the summary of changes for SB 141:

[Original punctuation provided.]

SB 141 Explanation of Changes, Version A to B

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

Section 1. Page 1, Line 4: Corrects the bridge number being designated the Raymond and Easter Conquest Bridge from "1802" to "1902."

[1:34:37 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN withdrew his objection for adopting the CS for SB 141, work order 33-LS0717\B, as the working document.

[1:34:42 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN found no further objection and SB 141, work order 33-LS0717\B was adopted.

[1:35:09 PM](#)

SAM GREELY, Staff, Senator Hoffman, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, read the sectional analysis:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Sectional Analysis
SB 141 version B
"An Act naming the Raymond and Esther Conquest
Bridge."

Section I AS 35.40.390.

AS 35.40 is amended by adding a new section to read:

Sec. 35.40.390. Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge. Bridge number 1902 over the Wood River between Dillingham and Aleknagik is named the Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge

[1:35:55 PM](#)

MR. GREELY paraphrased the sponsor statement for SB 141:

[Original punctuation provided.]

Sponsor Statement

SB 141 Raymond and Esther Conquest Bridge

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.

[1:37:27 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN noted that the committee had no questions for Mr. Greely.

[1:37:35 PM](#)

At ease

[1:37:49 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN reconvened the meeting and set an amendment deadline for SB 141 on Wednesday, January 24, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.

[1:38:16 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN held SB 141 in committee.

[1:38:25 PM](#)

At ease

[1:38:41 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN reconvened the meeting.

SB 129-MATT GLOVER BIKE PATH

[1:38:43 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN announced the consideration of SENATE BILL NO. 129 "An Act naming the Matt Glover Bike Path."

This bill was previously introduced in committee on May 4, 2023. The intention is to take public testimony and look to the will of the committee.

[1:38:59 PM](#)

SENATOR ROBERT MYERS, District Q, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, sponsor of SB 129, explained that currently the Department of Transportation is building a bike path from Badger road to the Fairbanks area, where presently there is no bike or pedestrian path; this would be the first time connecting the two areas. The bike path should be complete by summer and is honoring Matt Glover, who was an avid cyclist and well known in the Fairbanks Cycling Club. Mr. Glover lived in North Pole area, worked for the Alaskan Railroad and biked to work every day.

In October 2022 he was tragically killed in a crash on the Richardson highway while riding to work. Naming the path is an appropriate honor to him and a reminder about safety for cyclists, pedestrians, and motorists on the roads, which is a growing concern around Alaska.

[1:41:05 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked Mr. Mills about the fiscal note. She pointed out the two naming signs to be placed on either end of the bike path and asked how the signs will be covered by a future project in terms of fiscal impact.

[1:41:33 PM](#)

ANDY MILLS, Legislative Liaison, Department of Transportation (DOT), Juneau, Alaska, replied that because the department has

an existing project at that site, the signage would be covered under that project.

[1:42:14 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN asked about the replacement timeframe for the signage.

[1:42:24 PM](#)

MR. MILLS responded that normally the signage has a lifecycle dependent on where it is and its future replacement would be covered by the department's sign replacement program; in this case because the signage is covered by the existing active project, there is no additional cost and future cost would be accounted for.

[1:43:00 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN opened public testimony on SB 129.

[1:43:08 PM](#)

CELIA STAPLES, representing self, Family Relation to Matt Glover, Kansas, thanked Senator Myers for bringing this bill forward. She expressed her hope that committee members understand why it is important. She affirmed that Mr. Glover was an avid bike rider, riding 1000 miles per year. She said he will always be her son-in-law and described him as kind, thoughtful, generous, and helpful to those in need. He had an impact on Fairbanks and the whole community. She contended that this path comes too late for Mr. Glover, but not for others. She encouraged support of SB 129.

[1:45:32 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN thanked Ms. Staples for her testimony.

[1:45:37 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN closed public testimony on SB 129.

[1:45:45 PM](#)

At ease

[1:46:13 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN reconvened the meeting.

[1:46:20 PM](#)

SENATOR MYERS expressed his appreciation that SB 129 was moving forward.

[1:46:51 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN solicited a motion from the committee.

1:46:55 PM

SENATOR TOBIN moved to report SB 129, work order 33-LS0694\A from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

1:47:12 PM

CHAIR KAUFMAN found no objection and SB 129 was reported from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

1:47:20 PM

At ease

1:48:20 PM

CHAIR KAUFMAN reconvened the meeting and thanked the support staff.

1:48:52 PM

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kaufman adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting at 1:48 p.m.