

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

May 11, 2024

2:46 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator James Kaufman, Chair  
Senator David Wilson, Vice Chair  
Senator Löki Tobin  
Senator Jesse Kiehl  
Senator Robert Myers

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

All members present

**OTHER LEGISLATORS PRESENT**

Senator Forrest Dunbar

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 29

Urging federal support for the state's aviation fuel transition.

- MOVED HJR 29 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: HJR 29

SHORT TITLE: TRANSITION FROM LEADED AVIATION FUEL

SPONSOR(S): TRANSPORTATION

05/06/24	(H)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
05/06/24	(H)	TRA
05/07/24	(H)	TRA AT 1:00 PM BARNES 124
05/07/24	(H)	-- MEETING CANCELED --
05/08/24	(H)	TRA RPT 5DP 1AM
05/08/24	(H)	DP: C.JOHNSON, VANCE, MCKAY, STUTES, MCCABE
05/08/24	(H)	AM: MINA
05/08/24	(H)	TRA AT 9:00 AM BARNES 124
05/08/24	(H)	Moved HJR 29 Out of Committee
05/08/24	(H)	MINUTE(TRA)
05/09/24	(H)	TRANSMITTED TO (S)

05/09/24 (H) VERSION: HJR 29  
05/10/24 (S) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS  
05/10/24 (S) TRA  
05/11/24 (S) TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205

**WITNESS REGISTER**

JAKE ALMEIDA, Staff  
Representative Sarah Vance  
Alaska State Legislature  
Juneau, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Introduced HJR 29 on behalf of the House Transportation Committee.

SENATOR MIKE SHOWER, representing self  
Wasilla, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of HJR 29.

**ACTION NARRATIVE**

[2:46:09 PM](#)

**CHAIR JAMES KAUFMAN** called the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting to order at 2:46 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Wilson, Kiehl, Myers, and Chair Kaufman. Senator Tobin arrived soon thereafter.

**HJR 29-TRANSITION FROM LEADED AVIATION FUEL**

[2:46:59 PM](#)

**CHAIR KAUFMAN** announced the consideration of HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 29 Urging federal support for the state's aviation fuel transition.

[2:47:34 PM](#)

**JAKE ALMEIDA**, Staff, Representative Sarah Vance, Alaska State Legislature, Juneau, Alaska, introduced HJR 29 on behalf of the House Transportation Committee, read the following statement:

[Original punctuation provided.]

House Joint Resolution 29 urges the federal government to collaborate with Alaska's congressional delegation to grant Alaska a four-year extension to comply with the FAA's transition away from leaded aviation fuels.

- In 2022, the FAA launched the Eliminate Aviation Gasoline Lead Emissions (or EAGLE) initiative to see the elimination of leaded aviation fuel by 2030.

[2:48:28 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN joined the meeting.

[2:48:30 PM](#)

MR. ALMEIDA continued the introduction of HJR 29.

[Original punctuation provided.]

- While Alaska was initially granted extension until 2034, recent amendments to the FAA Reauthorization Act do not include the four-year extension, endangering the general aviation sector in Alaska.
- With this resolution we are supporting Senator Sullivan in his request for four more years to find and FUND a path forward.
- Large portions of our state are disconnected from a road system and rely on air travel.
- Many commercial and private aircraft are single piston engine powered and still require leaded fuels to function properly.
- Lacking approved alternative fuels and an adequate supply chain for replacement parts, many small piston engine aircraft could become economically unfeasible, with potential losses of up to \$100,000 per unit.
- If Alaska's transition away from leaded aviation fuels is not managed carefully, we run the risk of devastating both commercial and private piston engine-powered aircraft operations, creating significant challenges for Alaska's general aviation industry.
- It is important to address both the health concerns of leaded aviation fuels AND safeguard Alaska's economy and residents ability to access essential transportation networks.

- The legislature's support for this resolution is essential to show support to our congressional delegation in protecting Alaskans' interests and preserving vital services provided by the general aviation sector.

[2:51:33 PM](#)

SENATOR WILSON asked what the consequence would be if Alaska chooses not to comply [with the EAGLE initiative].

MR. ALMEIDA replied that concerns had been expressed by private and public aviation companies that have aircraft which rely on these [leaded] fuels. He said immediate enforcement would effectively ground those aircraft until repairs are made, or new aircraft replaces them. He said it would essentially deadlock carriers that rely on these aircraft.

[2:52:43 PM](#)

SENATOR WILSON asked about enforcement of the EAGLE initiative. He wondered how aircraft flown from private runways or using the river system to land on frozen tundra, who would be enforcing the initiative. He also referred to HJR 29, 33-LS1612\B, page 2, lines 14-16 and suggested a possible amendment, that would include copies to the FAA outlining the Alaska legislature's wishes.

[2:53:32 PM](#)

MR. ALMEIDA replied that adding the specified amendment to have copies sent to the current director of the FAA would be at the committee's discretion. He returned to the enforcement question and explained that the FAA would be enforcing the [EAGLE] initiative. He said, if the initiative goes into effect in 2030, any aircraft that is not in compliance with the initiative will be subject to inspection and enforcement.

[2:54:28 PM](#)

SENATOR MYERS noted that leaded aviation fuel is one of the only fuels that is not manufactured in Alaska and all our leaded aviation fuel is shipped up. He said this would put the state in a bind, whether or not Alaska complies.

[2:55:22 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN noted that communities of color are most egregiously impacted by lead emissions. In most of rural Alaska, homes are located very near the airports. She asserted that the transition away from leaded fuels was specifically to help those communities and those children. She asked why HJR 29 doesn't

talk about fuels that can be used in the transition, like low leaded fuels and why doesn't it propose that we start on a path to transition to protect our communities, particularly the children in those communities.

SENATOR TOBIN noted HJR 29 was introduced May 6th and asked why it hadn't been introduced earlier, noting that the legislative session is due to end soon.

[2:56:18 PM](#)

MR. ALMEIDA answered the first question, explaining that the intent of HJR 29 is not to take a stance or a position on the EAGLE Initiative from the FAA, but to acknowledge that it is happening and there is a date in place to begin enforcing the initiative. HJR 29 is stating that the state would like an extra four years [to comply]. He opined that Alaska needs extra time. HJR acknowledges that Alaska needs more time to work with private enterprises to prevent or minimize the effect [of the EAGLE initiative].

MR. ALMEIDA in answer to the second question, said Alaska received late notice from the FAA to be on time for 2030, after having understood that the deadline had been amended to 2034. He said the notice came from U.S. Senator Sullivan, urging that a resolution from the Alaska legislature would be pivotal.

[2:58:10 PM](#)

SENATOR TOBIN referred to HJR 29, page 1, lines 9 - 11. She opined that it would not be untoward to say Alaska supports the federal governments assistance in the transition using low level lead fuels and recognizing the health and safety of our citizens. She acknowledged HJR 29 may not represent a stance [opposing the EAGLE initiative], but she said the transition is happening and we do believe the federal government has a role in helping Alaska make that transition for all our communities.

MR. ALMEIDA expressed a willingness to work with the committee to make that change.

[2:58:55 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN noted that if HJR 29 makes it to the floor of the senate, amendments could be done there.

CHAIR KAUFMAN said the operational benefits [of leaded fuel] are significant, and he recalled the noticeable damaging effects of switching to unleaded fuels in automobile engines. He sought to

balance safety concerns for affected aircraft and environmental effects when the transition to unleaded fuel takes place.

3:00:05 PM

CHAIR KAUFMAN opened public testimony on HJR 29.

3:00:34 PM

SENATOR MIKE SHOWER, representing self, Wasilla, Alaska, said, though he is the Senator from District 0, he is testifying on behalf of himself. He expressed high interest in this resolution and said that he is quite knowledgeable on this topic.

SENATOR SHOWER noted the concern for communities of color and said the state is already only using low lead gas, there is no leaded gas anymore. There's 100 low lead and that is all that is out there. That is as low as it goes without changing the makeup of engines and parts, etc. It is already very low by standards of emissions. He opined that there are not very high emissions from piston powered engines, and he compared emission rates to a car engine, which, he said, have slightly more horsepower than airplanes do.

SENATOR SHOWER opined that if the EAGLE initiative transition takes place at the pace proposed by the FAA, the communities of color who rely on piston powered aircraft, will experience high costs, grounded aircraft and possibly a suspension of aviation support, which they need for food, fuel, medicine, emergency care and transport between the small communities. He said in addition to the high cost, safety is a consideration as well. He said some of the aircraft will not be able to operate and there is potential for dangerous situations.

SENATOR SHOWER said he thought 100 low lead fuel would still be made if the transition is made because there is a very large market for it, as the largest geographical state relying heavily on-air transportation. He described his experience with his personal aircraft and said that, though it has been modified to accept unleaded fuel, he has been advised to mix in low lead fuel to protect the engine.

SENATOR SHOWER acknowledged that the transition is coming, and he said the question is to support the congressional delegation to let them know Alaska needs more time to do this, because this is going to significantly affect Alaska. The state will not be able to deliver supplies and people without an extension; not without prohibitive costs, danger when flying the aircraft, and the inability to move people in far flung communities.

[3:04:12 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN closed public testimony on HJR 29.

[3:04:19 PM](#)

At ease.

[3:04:32 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN reconvened the meeting and solicited the will of the committee.

[3:04:48 PM](#)

SENATOR WILSON moved to report HJR 29, work order 33-LS1612\B, from committee with individual recommendations and attached fiscal note(s).

[3:05:13 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN found no objection and HJR 29 was reported from the Senate Transportation Standing Committee.

[3:05:16 PM](#)

At ease.

[3:06:36 PM](#)

CHAIR KAUFMAN reconvened the meeting.

[3:07:56 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Kaufman adjourned the Senate Transportation Standing Committee meeting at 3:07 p.m.