

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE RULES STANDING COMMITTEE**

May 17, 2025

10:19 a.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Louise Stutes, Chair
Representative Chuck Kopp, Vice Chair
Representative Bryce Edgmon
Representative Calvin Schrage
Representative Sarah Vance
Representative Mia Costello
Representative Cathy Tilton

MEMBERS ABSENT

All members present

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

SENATE BILL NO. 152

Renaming Ruby Airport as Harold Esmailka Airport; and providing for an effective date.

- MOVED SB 152 OUT OF COMMITTEE

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

BILL: SB 152

SHORT TITLE: HAROLD ESMAILKA AIRPORT AT RUBY

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) CRONK

03/31/25	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
03/31/25	(S)	TRA, STA
04/10/25	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/10/25	(S)	Heard & Held
04/10/25	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
04/15/25	(S)	TRA AT 1:30 PM BUTROVICH 205
04/15/25	(S)	Moved SB 152 Out of Committee
04/15/25	(S)	MINUTE(TRA)
04/18/25	(S)	TRA RPT 3DP 2NR
04/18/25	(S)	DP: BJORKMAN, TOBIN, KIEHL
04/18/25	(S)	NR: STEDMAN, SHOWER
05/06/25	(S)	STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
05/06/25	(S)	Heard & Held
05/06/25	(S)	MINUTE(STA)

05/08/25 (S) STA AT 3:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
 05/08/25 (S) Moved SB 152 Out of Committee
 05/08/25 (S) MINUTE(STA)
 05/09/25 (S) STA RPT 5DP
 05/09/25 (S) DP: KAWASAKI, YUNDT, WIELECHOWSKI,
 GRAY-JACKSON, BJORKMAN
 05/09/25 (S) TRANSMITTED TO (H)
 05/09/25 (S) VERSION: SB 152
 05/10/25 (H) READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
 05/10/25 (H) RLS
 05/17/25 (H) RLS AT 8:30 AM GRUENBERG 120

WITNESS REGISTER

SENATOR MIKE CRONK
 Alaska State Legislature
 Juneau, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: As prime sponsor, presented SB 152.

ACTION NARRATIVE

[10:19:16 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE LOUISE STUTES called the House Rules Standing Committee meeting to order at 10:19 a.m. Representatives Vance, Costello, Tilton, Schrage, Kopp, and Stutes were present at the call to order. Representative Edgmon arrived as the meeting was in progress.

SB 152-HAROLD ESMAILKA AIRPORT AT RUBY

[10:20:06 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE STUTES announced that the only order of business would be SENATE BILL NO. 152, "An Act renaming Ruby Airport as Harold Esmailka Airport; and providing for an effective date."

[10:20:30 AM](#)

SENATOR MIKE CRONK, Alaska State Legislature, as prime sponsor, presented SB 152. He offered brief highlights of segments of the sponsor statement [included in the committee file], which read in its entirety as follows [original punctuation provided]:

One of our most important obligations as a State Legislature is to honor Alaska's community leaders and extraordinary citizens. SB 152 would recognize the

contributions of Harold Esmailka to the community of Ruby and Alaska's aviation industry by renaming Ruby Airport to Harold Esmailka Airport.

Harold Esmailka, of Ruby, is a pioneer in Alaskan aviation. Over his lengthy career as a pilot, Harold flew across Alaska and has gotten to know people in dozens of Alaskan communities. In 1954, after concluding his service in the U.S. Army, Harold bought his first airplane - a 65-horsepower Aeronca Chief. Ten years later he and his wife, Florence, settled in Ruby and opened the Ruby Trading Company general store, which provided groceries and goods for the community.

In 1970, Mr. Esmailka opened Harold's Air Service, which grew to service 63 Alaskan villages and had 28 aircraft in its fleet. Harold's Air Service provided medivac services to Alaska's Interior and grew so large that he moved its base to Galena to accommodate its commercial needs. In 1982, Harold sold Harold's Air Service with plans to retire - but his heart called him back to the skies; just four years later he purchased Tanana Air Service and built the company into a small trailblazer for Interior aviation.

Harold based Tanana Air Service out of Fairbanks, where it provided mail, cargo, passenger transportation services to more than 80 communities. While Harold operated Tanana Air Service, he provided free transportation to the brothers, sisters, and clergy in Fairbanks Catholic Diocese as they traveled to local villages.

SB 152 renames the Ruby Airport to the Harold Esmailka Airport, paying homage to an incredible father, husband, veteran, entrepreneur, and Alaskan aviation legend.

[10:22:39 AM](#)

CHAIR STUTES opened public testimony on SB 152. After ascertaining there was no one who wished to testify, she closed public testimony.

[10:22:59 AM](#)

REPRESENTATIVE KOPP moved to report SB 152 out of committee with individual recommendations and the accompanying zero fiscal note. There being no objection SB 152 was reported out of the House Rules Standing Committee.

[10:23:37 AM](#)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Rules Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 10:23 a.m.