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Referred: State Affairs and
Finance

1 IN THE HOUSE

BY FISCHER

2 HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 34

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

5 Relating to ferry service between
6 Anchorage and Homer during the summer
7 months.

8 BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

9 WHEREAS for many years the state ferry M/V TUSTUMENA has carried
10 passengers and vehicles from the Port of Anchorage to Homer, Seldovia and
11 Kodiak, and return, on a complete round trip service weekends during the
12 ice-free summer months in Cook Inlet; and

13 WHEREAS for summer, 1974, the commissioner of public works has announced
14 the cancellation of that service; and

15 WHEREAS in justification for the discontinuance of that service the
16 commissioner stated that the ferry route between Anchorage and Homer pro-
17 duced insufficient revenue in relationship to the cost of operation to
18 justify its continuation, the Homer-Anchorage-Homer run paralleled a main
19 highway, and a greater need existed for the M/V TUSTUMENA in Prince William
20 Sound on a route between Seward and Valdez via the Columbia Glacier because
21 the traffic there outstripped the ability of the M/V BARTLETT to meet the
22 demand; and

23 WHEREAS the Alaska Marine Highway reported a deficit of \$4,126,000 in
24 the 1972-73 fiscal year and because more than 50 percent of the state's
25 revenue base is produced in the greater Anchorage area, this means that
26 more than 40 percent of the state's population which produces the revenue
27 that funds half of the state ferry system's deficit will be denied direct
28 access to state ferry service for business, recreation and travel if the
29 commissioner of public works' order with respect to the M/V TUSTUMENA is

1 permitted to stand; and

2 WHEREAS it is all well and good for the Alaska Marine Highway to meet
3 the desires of tourists during the summer season, but the state ferry system
4 was planned and constructed by Alaska taxpayers and is operated and maintained
5 with Alaska tax dollars when ferry revenues are insufficient to meet operat-
6 ing costs, and therefore the needs and desires of Alaska residents should
7 be considered first in scheduling ferry service operations; and

8 WHEREAS it is inconsistent with national policy during the "energy
9 crisis" to remove from a "mass transit" mode, a significant segment of its
10 operating schedule, the absence of which will require Anchorage residents
11 to drive their automobiles on a 454-mile round trip down the Seward and
12 Sterling Highways in order to board the M/V TUSTUMENA at Homer, thus
13 assuredly consuming far more gasoline for these private vehicles than the
14 M/V TUSTUMENA could possibly save in the elimination of the Homer-Anchorage
15 run;

16 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature questions the suf-
17 ficiency of the rationale for the commissioner of public works' order
18 cancelling Anchorage as a port of call for the state ferry M/V TUSTUMENA
19 and respectfully requests the Governor to direct the commissioner to restore
20 the Anchorage-Homer route for the M/V TUSTUMENA during the summer months
21 between June 1 and September 15, 1974, and during each summer travel season
22 thereafter when upper Cook Inlet is ice-free.