Offered: 3/3/89
Referred: Rules

6-0679H

Original sponsors: Hudson, Cato,
Ulmer, et al.

1 IN THE HOUSE BY THE FINANCE COMMITTEE

2 CS FOR HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 12 (Finance)

3 IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

4 SIXTEENTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

5 Relating to the Alaska marine highway

6 system master plan.

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

8 WHEREAS the Alaska marine highway system was created to provide an
9 intrastate transportation link between coastal communities in Southeast and
10 Southwest Alaska and an interstate link between Alaska and the continental
11 highway system; and

12 WHEREAS expansion of the Alaska marine highway system has been direct-
13 ly associated with the growth and economic and social development of the
14 coastal communities served and the changing transportation needs of the
15 state as a whole; and

16 WHEREAS the first priority for the Alaska marine highway system is to
17 provide intrastate transportation to communities not linked by road to the
18 state highway system; and

19 WHEREAS the Alaska marine highway system is essential to the economic
20 viability of Southeast and much of Southwest Alaska and supports signifi-
21 cant over-the-highway freight and tourist trade and travel between central
22 Alaska and Alaska's state capital; and

23 WHEREAS five of the nine vessels of the Alaska marine highway system,
24 including the mainline ferries Matanuska, Taku, Malaspina, and Tustumena,
25 are over 25 years old and will be approaching the end of their useful
26 economic lives in 5 to 10 years; and

27 WHEREAS there is growing public dissatisfaction with ferry schedules,
28 fares, and services provided by the Alaska marine highway system; and

29 WHEREAS a new breed of fast ferries exists today that offers improved

1 services with lower capital and operating costs; and

2 WHEREAS fast ferries can be acquired for a fraction of the replacement
3 cost for the existing LeConte-class vessels and would provide greater
4 flexibility for system expansion and scheduling; and

5 WHEREAS strategically employed fast ferries can maximize the use of
6 mainline ferries and extend the useful and economic life of these expensive
7 vessels; and

8 WHEREAS the Southeast Transportation Plan, dated June 1986, recognized
9 the growing obsolescence of the fleet and recommended the purchase and
10 employment of three new fast ferries to operate on the Ketchikan to Hollis,
11 Sitka to Juneau, and Juneau to Skagway routes and recommended new roads be
12 constructed, subject to funding and further environmental impact analysis;
13 and

14 WHEREAS the concept of mainline ferry service, supplemented by fast
15 ferries, new roads, and beneficial schedule changes has been adopted by the
16 Southeast Conference and recent agreements adopted by the cities of Haines,
17 Skagway, and Juneau; and

18 WHEREAS chapter 128, SLA 1986, appropriated $4,900,000 to acquire the
19 first of the recommended fast ferries; and

20 WHEREAS the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has
21 expended more than $600,000 of that appropriation for other marine highway
22 projects and has not taken any action to purchase a fast ferry; and

23 WHEREAS the federal government has advised the Department of Transpor-
24 tation and Public Facilities that federal funds will not be authorized to
25 purchase fast ferries until a marine highway system master plan has been
26 prepared and adopted by the commissioner of transportation and public
27 facilities; and

28 WHEREAS the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities advised
29 the legislature that the Alaska marine highway system master plan was in a

1 draft stage in January 1988, and should be completed in 60 to 90 days; and
2 WHEREAS the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities has
3 neither adopted the plan nor circulated the plan for legislative review;
4 and
5 WHEREAS it is in the best interest of all affected communities, tradi-
6 tional ferry users, and the state as a whole, that the master plan be
7 completed, transmitted to the legislature for review and approval, and
8 adopted and implemented on schedule by the Department of Transportation and
9 Public Facilities; and
10 WHEREAS the legislature should be provided drafts and completed plans
11 of all major transportation proposals affecting the citizens of this state
12 in a timely manner and any changes to an adopted plan should be transmitted
13 for review and approval before those changes are effected;
14 BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska State Legislature respectfully requests
15 the Governor to direct the Department of Transportation and Public Facili-
16 ties to expeditiously complete the federally required Alaska marine highway
17 system master plan and to submit the master plan to the legislature for
18 review by April 15, 1989; and be it
19 FURTHER RESOLVED that the master plan must include
20 (1) community and user comments and recommendations;
21 (2) Alaska marine highway system employee recommendations;
22 (3) a written summary of the relationship between the Alaska
23 marine highway system master plan and the state transportation long-term
24 plan;
25 (4) preliminary assessments of environmental impacts;
26 (5) a condition survey of vessels and facilities;
27 (6) a marketing, advertising, and promotional plan;
28 (7) proposals for changes in short-term and long-term operating
29 budgets;

1 (8) crew schedules;

2 (9) a statement on the effect of the Alaska marine highway

3 system on Alaska hire, Alaska residency, and local purchase;

4 (10) information relating to training;

5 (11) a statement on the compatibility of the plan with tradi-

6 tional commercial users; and

7 (12) a statement of the improvements in services provided by the

8 Alaska marine highway system.