

SJR

18

Alaska State Legislature

House of Representatives

Committee on Transportation



Rep. Bette Cato, Chairman

Pouch V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811
(907) 465-4858

April 13, 1987

COMMITTEE CALENDAR:

- CSSJR 18: Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway and requesting the issuance of commemorative postal stamps by the United States Postal Service and the Canada Post Corporation.
- HB 213: "An Act relating to allocation of federal-aid highway funds; and providing for an effective date."

FOR THIS MEETING YOU HAVE:

A folder on CSSJR 18 that includes:

- * a copy of CSSJR 18
- * a zero fiscal note
- * a memorandum from Sen. Duncan, sponsor of the resolution
- * information on the construction of the AlCan Highway
- * a history of the Alaska Highway
- * letters of support

A folder on HB 213 that includes:

- * a copy of HB 213
- * a statement by Rep. Hoffman, sponsor of the bill
- * a sectional analysis
- * availability of sums apportioned
- * an excerpt from the Alaska State Statutes
- * apportionments: Federal Aid Highway Act '76, '78, and '82
- * federal aid highway fund distribution
- * Alaska federal aid road miles
- * land & marine highway functional classification
- * DOT/PF project ranking
- * DOT/PF Central Region highway program
- * DOT/PF position paper

No. 155

STATE OF ALASKA 1987 LEGISLATIVE SESSION
FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST: March 17, 1987

Bill Version: CS SJR 18 (Prop)
Publish Date: 3-24-87

Revision Date: _____
Title: SJR 18 Commemorative stamp
AK Hwy's 50th year
Sponsor: Sen Duncan
Requestor: _____

Agency Affected: None
BRU: _____
Components: _____

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 87	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING		- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -

CAPITAL		- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
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REVENUE		- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -	- 0 -
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FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL						

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

- This resolution has no fiscal impact.

Prepared by: Terry Orness *Terry Orness* Phone: 465-4921
Division: aid to Senate Transportation Committee Date: 3/17/87

Approved by ~~Committee~~: Senator Lloyd Jones Date: 3/17/87
Agency: Lloyd Jones

- Distribution (by preparer):
- Legislative Finance
 - Legislative Sponsor
 - Requestor
 - Office of Management and Budget
 - Impacted Agency(ies)
 - Senate Secretary



Alaska State Legislature

SENATOR JIM DUNCAN

P. O. Box V JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811

(907) 465-4766

COMMITTEES:
FINANCE
RESOURCES
BUDGET AND AUDIT

M E M O R A N D U M

DATE: April 6, 1987

TO: Representative Bette Cato
Chairman
House Committee on Transportation

FROM: Senator Jim Duncan

RE: SJR 18, AlCan Highway Commemorative Stamp

I respectfully request a hearing for this bill at your earliest convenience. I am forwarding information to be used as backup for this legislation.

The 50th Anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway, referred to as the Alaska-Canada Highway, or the AlCan Highway, is in the year 1992. It has been requested by Philatelic groups, both in Alaska and Canada, that a commemorative stamp be issued in honor of the event. I have included correspondence as backup to the resolution.

Because of the requirement to submit a special request stamp issuance 36-months in advance, by the U.S Postal Service Citizens Stamp Advisory Committee in Washington, D.C., it is recommended that the process be initiated right away. Through this resolution, the Alaska Legislature will go on record as endorsing this action.

Alaska State Legislature

Senate Advisory Council



P.O. Box V
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99811
Phone: (907) 465-3114

MEMORANDUM

TO: Senator J. Duncan
Alaska State Legislature

ATTN: Ron Whitcraft

FROM: Lee Ann Lucas ^{JTS}
Researcher _{for}

DATE: March 20, 1987

RE: Construction of the AICan Highway
Request #87-001182

Attached is the information you requested on who constructed the AICan Highway.

Initial construction of the AICan Highway was completed by the U.S. Army. The units involved are listed below with their current status. If they are still active, I also gave an address to contact them.

ACTIVE

35th Engineer Battalion (originally 35th Combat Engineer Regiment)

Address: Commander
35th Engineer Battalion
Ft. Leonard Wood, Missouri 65473

76th Engineer Battalion (originally 340th General Services Regiment)

Address: Commander
76th Engineer Battalion
Ft. Drum, New York 13602

73rd Engineer Company (originally 73rd Light Ponton Company)

Address: Commander
73rd Engineer Company
Ft. Lewis, Washington 98433

Company D, 29th Engineer Topographic Battalion

Address: Commander
29th Engineer Topographic Battalion
Ft. Shafter, Hawaii 96858

INACTIVE

18th Engineer Battalion (originally 18th Combat Engineer Regiment)
93rd, 95th, and 97th Army Engineer Regiments
77th Engineer Battalion (originally 341st General Services Regiment)
74th Light Ponton Company
133rd and 134th Quartermaster Truck Company
140th and 141st Quartermaster Truck Company
428th Engineer Heavy Dump Truck Company
Company A, 648th Engineer Topographic Battalion

Later the AICan was improved to a year-round road with wider roadbeds and permanent bridges built by the U.S. Public Roads Administration.

My contact person for the above information was Doris Thomas in Public Affairs at Ft. Richardson in Anchorage. Her phone number is 862-9298.

If you have any further questions, please don't hesitate to call us.

JTS:jts

Attachment

to be
added
1973

the
TRAIL
of '42

A Pictorial History of the Alaska Highway

by stan cohen

northwest. Another access point was through Skagway, Alaska.

The road, when completed, traversed over 1400 miles from Dawson Creek to its junction with the Richardson Highway at Delta Junction, Alaska.

INITIAL CONSTRUCTION

The bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 was to produce one of the great engineering feats of the century. The west coast of the United States and Canada and all of Alaska lay open to a possible Japanese invasion and the defense of the area was of paramount importance in the early days of the war.

The attack had prompted President Roosevelt to form the Special Cabinet Committee to study the problems of building a road to Alaska through Canada. Brigadier General C.L. Sturdevant, the Assistant Chief of the United States Army Corps of Engineers was detailed to put together plans for the road's actual construction at the earliest possible time. There

was opposition to building the road even after Pearl Harbor. The navy thought it could keep the sea lanes free of enemy intrusions and the army questioned the use of badly needed supplies and soldiers on such a large scale project. But the pressing need for a quick decision to get men and supplies to the area while the ground was still frozen prompted action. After much haggling over which route to follow, a decision was made on February 2, 1942 to follow Route C or the Prairie Route. On February 14 a directive was issued for actual work to begin.

The plan was to start a road from the end of the railroad at Dawson Creek, British Columbia, cutting a pioneer road suitable only for military traffic to Whitehorse and terminating at Fairbanks, Alaska. It was to be built as fast as possible. Later it was to be followed up as a year around road with wider roadbeds and permanent bridges built by the United States Public Roads Administration (PRA).

Arrangements had to be made with the Canadian government, as most of the road would be built through British Columbia and the



Governor Ernest Gruening of Alaska, second from left, visited the Public Roads Administration camp in Whitehorse in October, 1942. On the left is Brigadier General James J. O'Conner, Commanding General of the highway construction. Third from left is Colonel John Wheeler, in charge of the actual construction and to his right is Colonel K. Bush, Chief of Staff. NA

Yukon Territory, using American troops and equipment. The Canadians agreed to furnish the right of way; to waive import duties, sales taxes, income taxes and immigration regulations, and to permit the taking of timber, gravel and rock from crownlands along the route. The Americans agreed to pay for the construction and to turn over the Canadian portion of the road to the Canadian government six months after the war ended.

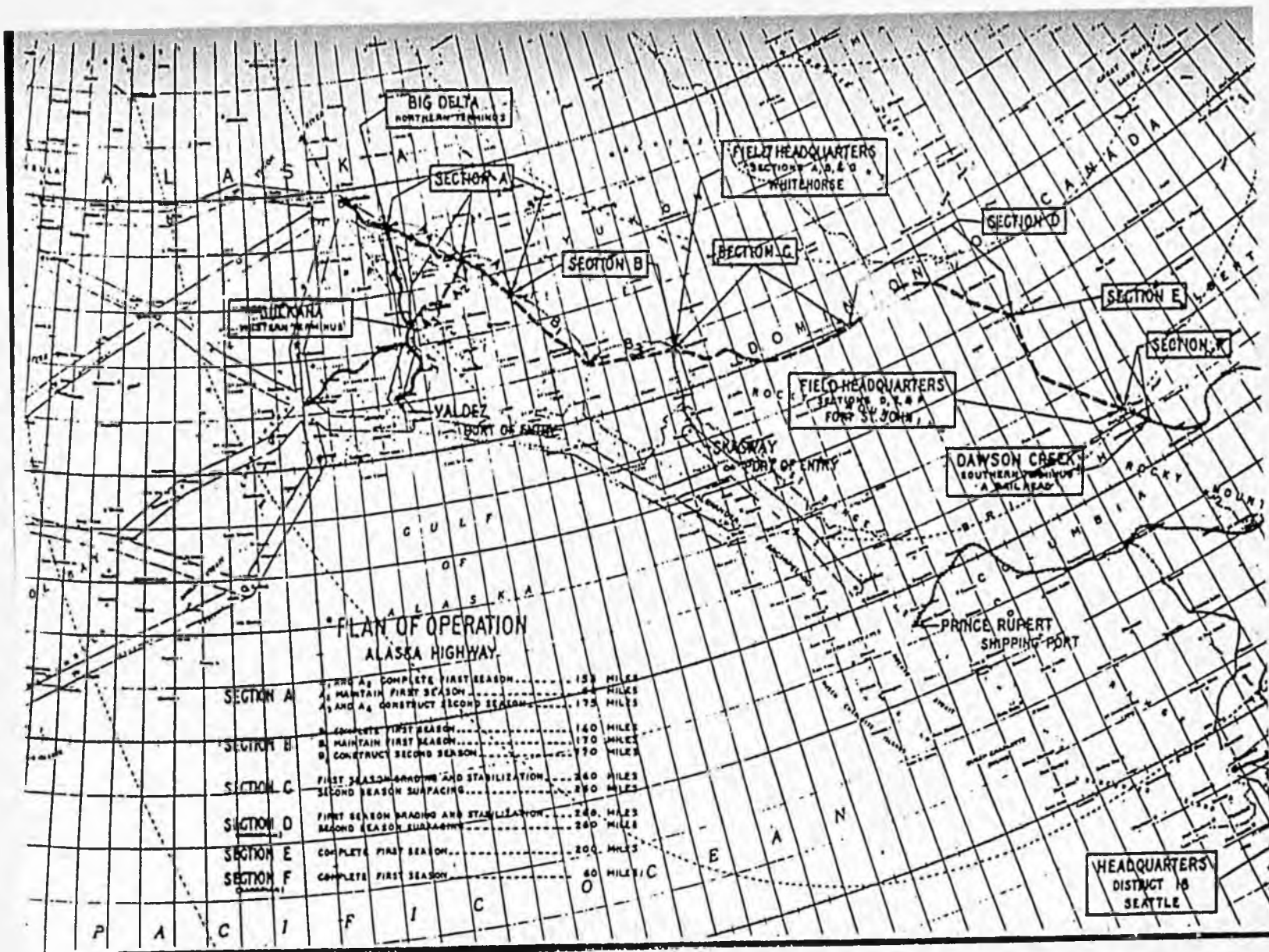
The initial command of the construction project was in the hands of General William M. Hoge, who tried to control the entire length of the route. He set up a southern sector headquarters at Ft. St. John and a northern sector headquarters at Whitehorse. This arrangement did not work due to the scope of the project and in June General Hoge assumed command of the northern sector. Colonel James A. O'Conner took over the southern sector. O'Conner, a 1907 West Point graduate was the engineer in charge of tunneling Corregidor's fortress in Manila harbor. Due to a lack of control over the entire project and to supply problems, a Northwest Ser-

vice Command was established in September, 1942 in Whitehorse with O'Conner, now a general, in charge. The Command was in charge of all U.S. Army activities along the highway and in that part of Canada.

By the first week of February, the President had authorized the army to proceed with all haste to begin construction of the road. It was initially named the Alcan Highway. Emergency funds were allocated and orders were issued to army troops to proceed to the end of rail at Dawson Creek. On March 2, 1942 the first train carrying troops arrived at the town.

There were few reliable maps of the proposed route and only a few trails cut by the local trappers and prospectors. There was a winter trail from Dawson Creek to Ft. Nelson and a wagon road from Whitehorse northwest to Kluane Lake, but not much more.

The 35th Combat Engineers were ordered to proceed to Dawson Creek and then to Ft. Nelson to begin location work in the spring. The 340th General Service Regiment went to Whitehorse and was to build the road south. The



341st General Service Regiment was stationed at Ft. St. John and was to build the road to Ft. Nelson. The 18th Combat Engineer Regiment went to Skagway and traveled the railroad to Whitehorse to build the road northwest toward Alaska.

Those four regiments were thus poised in the spring of 1942 for the great construction job ahead. Twelve hundred miles of road in Canada and over 200 miles in Alaska were to be cut through as quickly as possible. With the addition of three more army regiments, the 93rd, 95th and 97th — all of which were composed of black troops with white officers — the total strength of troops for the construction job in 1942 was over 11,000. The PRA also provided location crews and private contractors during this period.

Dawson Creek in early March was swarming with troops starting up the "road" to Ft. St. John and Ft. Nelson. The road was to follow the winter trail from Ft. St. John past Charlie Lake through thick forests and along ridgetops on the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains, crossing

several large rivers and continuing to Ft. Nelson.

Local trappers, Indians and prospectors were pressed into service to help locate the way, although their suggestions for possible routes were not always the most appropriate for a motorized highway. Local packers, with their mule teams were used to help supply the advanced survey parties.

Six hundred thirty-five miles of wilderness stretched from Ft. Nelson to Watson Lake, the first settlement in the Yukon Territory. The highest point of the road crossed Summit Lake at over 4,000 feet. The road then traversed up mountains and down valleys, crossing large rivers and hundreds of small streams. The road followed a general northwesterly direction to Watson Lake. Names such as Trutch, Steamboat Mountain, Toad River, Muncho Lake and the Liard River were etched forever in the minds of the soldiers who labored on the road.

At Lower Post, just south of the Yukon border, the new road followed an old road to Watson Lake, where the route to the northwest

was very unclear. Several routes to Whitehorse were explored and the one finally chosen followed the Rancheria River Valley across the Mackenzie-Yukon River divide, then along the Swift River to Teslin Lake and Marsh Lake. It followed an old prospector's trail to Whitehorse.

From Whitehorse, the road skirted the north side of the St. Elias Range, around the south shore of Kluane Lake, the largest in the Yukon, and crossed the large glacial rivers of western Yukon — the Sims, the Donjek and the White. At the Alaska border, over 1200 miles from Dawson Creek, the route traversed through the Tanana River Valley connecting Northway and Tok to Delta Junction where the road connected with the Richardson Highway, built in the 1920s. Delta Junction is recognized by some

opposite

Surveying to lay out a line for the bulldozers to follow through the dense forest was difficult but necessary. The center line was roughed out on maps but the foot-by-foot line had to be surveyed and investigated on the ground. Members of the 341st Engineers survey between Ft. St. John and Ft. Nelson in May, 1942. USA.

and Fairbanks by others as the official end of the highway.

The soldiers of the army and the civilians of the PRA faced countless days of below zero temperatures, snow, rain, insects and even intense heat coupled with the problems associated with building a road in an unknown environment.

By April, road locaters were working throughout the country with the hum of bulldozers on their heels. Decisions on the route were sometimes made on the spot and if the route was not quite in the right place, the PRA men corrected it later. Workers often climbed trees to figure out the route ahead. Then the bulldozers would cut out a path. Often three to four miles of road were built in a day as the summer daylight hours permitted the men to work 24 hours a day. The big push was to get to Fairbanks as soon as possible with a pioneer road. Local bush pilots were hired to ferry men and supplies along the route. The riverboats along the Yukon's inland rivers and lakes were pressed into service. There was no limit set on

the amount of equipment or money to get the job done. To the old-timers of the north, this American explosion of power and wealth was overwhelming.

There was a race against time in the southern sector as spring thaws made travel over the winter trail in the Ft. St. John to Ft. Nelson area impossible. Supplies had to be stockpiled on the route for the spring and summer construction period.

The most pressing problem along the route was the inexperience of the engineers in building a highway on the muskeg and permafrost. The ground is permanently frozen year around just below the muskeg in many areas along the route and if the top layer is stripped off, which was the case along part of the route, the underlying ground thaws out and produces a quagmire which is difficult to deal with. Ditches were installed to drain off the excess thawing water, but were ineffective. Finally the crews left the muskeg intact and built the road on top of it, laying a roadbed of gravel where needed.

The construction methods took a terrific toll

in men and machines and there were bound to be accidents along the way. One of the worst tragedies occurred at Charlie Lake near Ft. Nelson on May 14, 1942. Eleven men drowned in the lake when their raft capsized. Other men were killed in road accidents or died from the extremely cold temperatures.

The route between Whitehorse and the Alaska border was extremely difficult to work on. There was no adequate route information and the terrain was very difficult to cut a road through. There were miles of swamps, large glacial rivers to cross and much hard rock construction — especially around Kluane Lake. Ice jams in the rivers during the spring breakup were very dangerous. The temperatures in winter fell to 50 degrees below zero and lower. At this temperature, machinery would not function and it was very dangerous to work outside. But the work continued through the early spring, summer and fall, with the road slowly being inched toward Alaska. The troops were building both north and south of Whitehorse, the major supply point of the northern sector, and toward

Whitehorse from Ft. Nelson. Additional troops of the 97th Engineers proceeded north from Valdez, Alaska and started building the road southeast to the Yukon border. The PRA and the Alaska Road Commission personnel also worked to improve the Richardson Highway into Fairbanks.

Finally on September 24, 1942, bulldozer operators of the 35th and 340th Regiments met at Contact Creek (MP 588.1, Km 946.3) to close the southern sector of the road at Beaver Creek, Yukon (MP 1202, Km 1934) on October 20, 1942, when troops working south from Alaska and north from Whitehorse met. Thus the pioneer road had been completed in record time (eight months and twelve days) and an opening ceremony was held at Soldiers Summit on Kluane Lake on November 20, 1942 to officially celebrate the completion of an overland link to northern Canada and Alaska. General O'Connor represented the United States Army and Minister Ian Mackenzie represented Canada along with a contingent of Royal Canadian Mounted Police and American soldiers. This had

been a joint effort of the United States and Canada that probably would have been years off if not sparked by wartime emergencies.

But this was only the beginning as the pioneer road was just that — a partially single lane, very rough road that would have to be upgraded immediately in order to be usable by the increasing military traffic.



Gastineau
Philatelic
Society

P. O. BOX 841st
020641

JUNEAU, ALASKA 99802-0641

January 25, 1987

*Remember
to support*
OFFICE OF

secretary

Jim Duncan
Alaska Senate
Capitol Building
Juneau, Alaska 99811

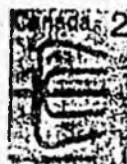
Dear Jim:

I am enclosing a letter we received from the Fort St. John Junior Stamp Club, in regard to a joint Canada-US stamp commemorating the 50th anniversary of the completion of the Alcan Highway. At our last meeting we resolved to support the issuance of a stamp in honor of the great event. The Anchorage Philatelic Society feels the same way.

We believe this to be a very important event, so we are asking your support at this time, and to do whatever is necessary to get it accomplished. I am also writing Fran Ulmer & Bill Hudson. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Gloria Ahrensfield
Mrs. Gloria Ahrensfield
secretary



FORT ST. JOHN JUNIOR STAMP CLUB

c/o 10003-100th Street

Fort St. John, B.C., V1J 3Y5

Canada



September 30, 1986

Dear Sir/Madam:

The Fort St. John Junior Stamp Club, located at Mile 49 of the Alaska Highway is asking the Governments of Canada and the United States to issue a joint commemorative stamp in 1992 honouring the construction of the Alaska Highway.

In its construction, the Alaska Highway helped to ensure that Alaska and the northwest would remain in Allied hands. It helped to tie down enemy forces and to weaken opposition to the Allied war effort in the Pacific. That a 1,500 mile road was built in some of the roughest terrain and weather conditions known. In the short time of nine months in 1942 was itself an engineering miracle.

Since the end of the war, the Alaska Highway region has seen tremendous development. Today, this Highway carries the lifeblood of the economies of Alaska, Yukon and northern British Columbia along its route. In 1992, we will celebrate the Fiftieth Anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway. We have received the support of our regional government, the Peace River-Liard Regional District. Letters have been written to the representatives of other governments along the length of the Alaska Highway. Now we ask that you lend your support to this request by sending a letter of support to the addresses noted below and by making your elected representatives aware that you support the issue of commemorative stamps by Canada and the United States to honour the construction of the Alaska Highway. It would be appreciated if you could send a copy of your letter to the undersigned.

Send your letters to:

Mr. Rene Marin, Chairman
Stamp Selection Committee
Canada Post Corporation
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0V1

and to

Mr. Belmont Faries, Chairman
Stamp Advisory Committee
United States Postal Service
Washington, D.C. 20260-4452

Sincerely yours,

Phil Cove
Phil Cove
Advisor
Fort St. John Junior Stamp Club

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE

POUCH Y - STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811
907-465-3800

LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

LEGISLATIVE REFERENCE LIBRARY

May, 1988

Copies of minutes listed below were originally included in this file. The minutes are available on the STAIRS database CMPR. In order to save space copies of minutes have not been left in the files.

Mary Van Nimwegen

H. TRANS. 4-13-87 1:30 p.m.

HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

(7)

Date referred: 3/30/87

FURTHER REFERRALS:

4/15
Rule

DATE: April 13, 1987

The Transportation Committee has considered CSSJR 18(Trsp)

Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the construction of the Alaska Highway and requesting the issuance of commemorative postal stamps by the United States Postal Service and the Canada Post Corporation.

RECOMMENDS:

- replace with _____ the same title
- attached amendment(s) a new title
- do pass
- do not pass
- no recommendation
- individual recommendations
- additional referral to the _____ Committee

ADOPTS: _____ letter of intent

ATTACHES NEW FISCAL NOTE(S):

- fiscal impact same as previous fiscal note published _____
- zero fiscal note same as previous zero fiscal note published 3/24/87
- zero with analysis

SIGNING DO PASS:

SIGNING OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS:

Mike Miller

W. J. ...

Bob ...

Bette ...

Bette ...
Chairman's signature



Official Business

COMMITTEE:

House Transportation Committee

DATE: April 13, 1987

SIGN-IN

Subject of meeting:

CSSJR 18: Commemorative Stamp; AK HWY's 50th Year

*HB 213: Allocation of Federal Highway F Funds

NAME Please include title **ADDRESS** Please use full address. Please include zip. **PHONE** **REPRESENTING** **DO YOU WANT TO TESTIFY?**

NAME	ADDRESS	PHONE	REPRESENTING	DO YOU WANT TO TESTIFY?
J-W Scribner Admin Dept Commisr.	AK DOT & PF PO BOX 2 TOWN 99811	465-3900	AK DOT & PF	Y (HB 213)
RON Whitcraft STAFF ASSISTANT	to SEN DUNCAN	5-4766		STM 18 Yes
Lyman Holten	112 CAPITOL	4530		Y (HB 213)

* indicates first public hearing

Mr. Speaker;

The Al-Can Highway has been an important lifeline to the development of the economies of Alaska and northwestern Canada. Construction on the highway began in 1942 in response to the bombing of Pearl Harbor which was thought to have laid the entire west coast of the United State and Canada open to a possible invasion from Japan. President Roosevelt felt that access to the Territory was essential to the country's security and a construction plan was quickly put into action. Construction of the highway at that time was considered to be a great engineering accomplishment given the 1500 miles of rough terrain to be covered and the technology that was available at the time.

The 50th anniversary of the construction of the Al-Can Highway is in 1992. In order to recognize this occasion, CS SJR 18 has been introduced to encourage the United States Postal Service and the Canada Post Corporation to coordinate a simultaneous issuance of a United States stamp and a Canadian stamp commemorating the event. Action is required at this time because of the 36 month notice required by the U. S. Postal Service Citizen's Stamp Advisory Committee in Washington, D. C., as it considers requests for the issue of special stamps. I urge your support of CS SJR 18 so that the Alaska State Legislature will go on record as endorsing this action.

~~██████████~~