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# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

STEVE COWPER, GOVERNOR

400 WILLOUGHBY AVE.  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1796  
PHONE: (907) 465-2400

April 7, 1988

The Honorable Lloyd Jones  
Chair, Senate Transportation  
Committee  
P.O. Box V  
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Senator Jones:

Subject: Senate Resolution 31, relating to the official designation of state scenic highways by the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities.

Position: While the Department of Natural Resources supports the continued development of tourism in Alaska, we also support the use and development of the state's natural resources. We are concerned that scenic highway designations could unnecessarily restrict or prohibit the use and development of natural resources adjacent to or in the view-shed of designated roads and urge caution in implementing this program.

Background: The department has been involved in several efforts to establish scenic highways in Alaska. As you may know, Section 1311 of ANILCA required that a study of the 335 mile long road corridor between Denali and Wrangell - St. Elias National Parks be conducted to determine whether the highway should be designated as scenic. The completed study led to the conclusion that it was not necessary to designate the corridor as scenic to ensure its protection because both the state and the federal government possessed sufficient authority to protect Alaska's scenic resources.

The department currently addresses scenic resource protection during the development of area or other land use plans. In addition, scenic values are protected through lease, contract or permit stipulations and requirements.

It should be noted that gravel and material deposits necessary for road and other construction activities are often

April 7, 1988

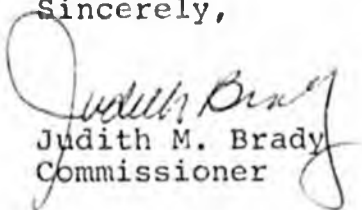
located within or adjacent to highway rights-of-way. Timber harvesting, mining, and oil and gas development may also occur within highway view-sheds and could be severely impacted by scenic highway designations.

Recommendation: We recommend that scenic highway programs in other states be examined and that answers to the following questions be developed before an Alaska Scenic Highway program is established.

- o What restrictions would be imposed on areas adjacent to or in the view-shed of a scenic highway?
- o What additional costs would highway businesses incur because of scenic highway restrictions?
- o Would marine highways be included in the program?
- o Could scenic highway designations be considered during the state's area planning process?

We would be happy to work with the committee and the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities concerning this matter. Please let me know if you would like additional information.

Sincerely,

  
Judith M. Brady  
Commissioner

cc: Committee Members  
Bill Sponsor  
Bob Evans  
Rod Swope  
Commissioner Hickey

FISCAL NOTE

REQUEST:

Revision Date: 4/8/88  
Title: Scenic Highways  
Sponsor: Sen. Kerttula, Szymanski  
Requestor: Senate Transportation Coma.

Agency Affected: Natural Resources  
BRU: Land and Water Management  
Components: \_\_\_\_\_

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (Thousands of Dollars)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES						
TRAVEL						
CONTRACTUAL						
SUPPLIES						
EQUIPMENT						
LAND & STRUCTURES						
GRANTS, CLAIMS						
MISCELLANEOUS						
TOTAL OPERATING	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
CAPITAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-
REVENUE	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

FUNDING: (Thousands of Dollars)

GENERAL FUND						
FEDERAL FUNDS						
OTHER						
TOTAL	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-	-0-

POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME						
PART-TIME						
TEMPORARY						

ANALYSIS : (Attach a separate page if necessary)

As currently written, this resolution would not result in the additional expenditure of funds by the Department. However, if extensive planning work for scenic highways is necessary within a particular period of time, additional operating funds may be needed.

Prepared by: Carol Wilson Phone: 465-2400  
Division: Commissioner's Office Date: 4/8/88

Approved by Commissioner: Lennie Gorsuch Date: 4/11/88  
Agency: Natural Resources

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

# STATE OF ALASKA



## SENATE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

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SEN. ARLISS STURGULEWSKI  
SEN. JAN FAIKS  
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SEN. PAT RODEY

P.O. BOX V  
STATE CAPITOL  
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811  
(907) 465-3717  
(907) 465-3771

DATE: April 20, 1988  
TO: *Lloyd*  
Senator Lloyd Jones, Chairman  
Senate Transportation Committee  
FROM: Senator Jay Kerttula  
RE: SR 31, Scenic Highways

I would appreciate your scheduling SR 31, Scenic Highways, for a hearing in Senate Transportation at your earliest possible convenience. This resolution addresses the designation, design, construction and maintenance of state highways as scenic highways.

Attached is a position paper from the Department of Transportation and Public Facilities. DOT/PF is in support of SR 31.

Also included is additional information for your use. Thank you for your consideration of SR 31.

REQUEST: FISCAL NOTE

Revision Date:  
Title: Relating to scenic highways.

Agency Affected: DOT&PF  
BRU: Engineering & Operations  
Standards

Sponsor: Kertula and Szymanski  
Requestor: J.C. RAY

Components:

EXPENDITURES/REVENUES: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

OPERATING	FY 88	FY 89	FY 90	FY 91	FY 92	FY 93
PERSONAL SERVICES	0	20	0	0	0	0
TRAVEL	0	2	0	0	0	0
CONTRACTURAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
SUPPLIES	0	0.5	0	0	0	0
EQUIPMENT	0	0	0	0	0	0
LAND & STRUCTURES	0	0	0	0	0	0
GRANTS, CLAIMS	0	0	0	0	0	0
MISCELLANEOUS	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL OPERATING	0	22.5	0	0	0	0
CAPITAL	0	0	0	0	0	0
REVENUE	0	0	0	0	0	0

FUNDING: (THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS)

GENERAL FUND	0	22.5	0	0	0	0
FEDERAL FUNDS	0	0	0	0	0	0
OTHER	0	0	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	0	22.5	0	0	0	0

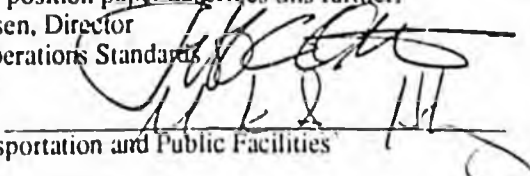
POSITIONS:

FULL-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
PART-TIME	0	0	0	0	0	0
TEMPORARY	0	0.5	0	0	0	0

ANALYSIS: The department proposes to address the broad range of policy and financial aspects of a scenic highway program with a short, 6 month study based principally on an evaluation of programs in other states and provinces. This effort envisions use of an Alaskan graduate student pursuing an education in a field with expertise in scenic resources. A report would be available at the beginning of the 16th Legislature addressing policy options concerning scenic highways, including budget implications. Fiscal impacts beyond FY 1989 would be presented in this position paper. The department's position paper describes this further.

Prepared by: Jeffery C. Ottesen, Director  
Division: Engineering and Operations Standards

Phone: 465-2951  
Date: March 11, 1988

Approved by Commissioner:   
Agency: Department of Transportation and Public Facilities

Date: 3/11/88

Distribution (by preparer):  
Legislative Finance  
Legislative Sponsor  
Requestor  
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Impacted Agency(ies)



**Dept. of Transportation & Public Facilities**

# POSITION PAPER

**BILL NO:** Senate Resolution No. 31  
**TITLE:** An act relating to Scenic Highways

**APPROVED:** Mark S. Hickey  
Commissioner  
**DATE:** 3-11-88

This resolution addresses a potentially significant program concerning the designation, design and construction, and maintenance of state highway facilities as scenic highways. This concept is used in a number of states and it is conceptually appropriate for Alaska given the grandeur of our scenic resources and the ever growing tourism industry.

Implementation of such a program would require the establishment of criteria and procedures, as well as differing design and maintenance standards suited to scenic highway status. This initial work is not readily accomplished through existing staff and resources as it represents both a significant endeavor and one requiring expertise not currently available within the department.

Subsequent cost differences, if any, concerning maintenance and design standards are not identifiable at this time.

While the resolution, as now written, requests implementation of a scenic highway program including standards development, staffing and public awareness campaigns, the department would suggest an evaluation of options by examining the programs now in place in other localities. This initial examination could be accomplished prior to the next session, and recommendations for the manner and format contained therein.

We propose this approach, not as an attempt to "study the concept to death," but to define both the most meritorious approach and the one with the least pitfalls. For example, some programs have caused significant delays in highway reconstruction because the scenic designation required more elaborate environmental reviews than is normally undertaken. Other states have found that even routine maintenance activities, such as brush cutting, require a multiplicity of approvals after a scenic designation is invoked.

Our recommendation would be for the department to examine the value and merits of a scenic highway program, including evaluations of programs in other jurisdictions to determine what works well, and what hasn't. This examination should also define potential costs to both operating and capital budgets relative to various options.

The department requests funding for a 1/2 FTE to temporarily hire an Alaskan graduate student pursuing an education in scenic resources, landscape architecture, the tourism industry or a related discipline.

With the recommendations contained herein, the department endorses this resolution as both timely and important to the relationship of state supported transportation to the visitor industry.

For further information call Susan Fleischhauer at 465-3900

MAR 14 1988

March 9, 1988

Dear Senator Jones,

MAR 14 1988

I am the chairman of the "Sheep Mountain Coalition." In 1982 we visited Senator Kertola in Juneau and initiated the introduction of legislation which would establish a scenic highway system for Alaska. We also introduced a bill to appropriate funds to do a comprehensive study of the scenic resources along the Glenn Highway, so that portions of it could be determined appropriate for "scenic" status. Unfortunately, it was late in the session in 1982, and for personal reasons I was unable to campaign for a scenic highway system again until now.

I would like to express a few ideas in support of Senate Resolution No. 31, in hopes that you will find it worthy of committee consideration as soon as possible.

- 1) Driving for pleasure is the most popular outdoor recreational activity in the United States.
- 2) Tourism is the leading industry in Alaska.
- 3) Alaska's world-class pristine mountain scenery is perhaps its main attraction to visitors.

4) Most visitors and most residents experience Alaska from the road system most of the time.

5) The idea of a scenic highway system is very popular with Alaskans who have all types of political, economic, and personal perspectives. We easily and quickly collected over 200 signatures in 1982, with very little opposition.

6) Initial scenic highway legislation can be administered on state and federal lands. Since a Scenic Highway System will promote economic growth as well as preservation of scenic beauty, it is in the public interest to initiate some legislation before more pristine vistas are lost to careless placing of powerlines, gravel pits, and other disruptive land uses. Other land uses can occur on state lands where scenic resource quality is lower and less fragile than on those segments of highways designated as "scenic."

The Senate Resolution No. 31 is just a first step;.. Scenic Highway legislation is a chance for Alaskans to manage its number one resource wisely.

Colour May  
o'toad Thank You,  
Linden Colour O'Toole

SXC. box 8488-C  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
746-1009

Scenic Highways  
billfile

~~Beth  
Jupiter~~

MAR 14 1988

March 9, 1988

Sheep Mountain, Alaska

Dear Senator Kertula,

I am writing to express my support and enthusiasm for Senate Resolution No. 31 relating to scenic highways. I would really like to see legislation passed and appropriations made to fund scenic resource evaluation studies ... hopefully next year the political climate will be more ready for a stronger action.

There are a few points I would like to make in support of the establishment of an Alaska Scenic Highway System:

1. Driving for Pleasure is the most popular outdoor recreational activity in the United States.
- 2) Tourism is perhaps the leading revenue-producing industry in Alaska.
- 3) Alaska has some of the most spectacular road-side landscapes in the world. Most people who visit Alaska are attracted in large part to view pristine scenery.

- 4.) The great majority of All people (tourists and residents alike) spend most of their time on the road system. Many, Many times more hours of recreational viewing are experienced along Alaska's highways than in designated recreational areas.
- 5.) The idea of carefully managing Alaska's remaining unblemished vistas is very popular with Alaskans in all walks of life. Four years ago when the concept was first introduced by the Sheep Mountain Coalition, we quickly and easily obtained two hundred signatures stating support of designating the Glenn Highway as 'scenic'
- 6.) Scenic resources are currently considered in some State land use planning, but are generally secondary in importance to more tangibly profitable land uses such as settlement, timber production, and mineral extraction. Because of the difficulty in assessing the direct monetary return from landscape management, it has been considered to be less important than the developments which damage its integrity. If there was a complete analysis of how State road-side lands should be utilized in Alaska, it would probably

become very apparent that maintaining the pristine quality of highly scenic areas is probably a sound economic idea. Tourists come to see beautiful, wild country; not a maze of gravel pits, power lines, clear cuts, and subdivisions.

7) Because much of the land adjacent to Alaska's road system is still under state and federal ownership, we have a unique opportunity to manage a scenic resource of world-wide importance. Once a scenic highway system is established, funds should be appropriated to evaluate each highway under consideration for designation. A comprehensive report on each highway should identify those portions of the road which should be managed as "scenic highway," and also those areas where other uses such as settlement or disruptive land uses would be of least impact. In this manner, all land uses may co-exist, and the most appropriate area for each type of use will be identified. On lands designated as scenically superior and fragile, visual impacts such as road upgrades, powerline construction, and other projects which will cause potential loss of scenic values should be

placed in a manner which is most sensitive and least disruptive to the scenic experience of roadside viewers.

8) Each year Alaska loses many pristine vistas. A scenic highway system is something which needs to happen as quickly as possible, before we carelessly forfeit the grand gift which nature has blessed us with, in trade for the small savings on power and development projects which we consider to be more important in our short-sighted vision.

Thank you for your support of a Scenic Highway System for Alaska. It may be one of the most significant pieces of legislation of your career in the State Senate. You are helping to preserve the experience of wild and beautiful landscapes for millions of people to enjoy.

Sincerely,

Linden Coloum O' Toole  
SRC box 8488-C  
Palmer, Alaska 99645  
746-1009

Scenic Highway Designation  
for the Glenn Highway

1. The exact shape and implications of this designation for the Glenn Highway are not known at this time because Alaska currently has no such category for its highway system. In other states such as Oregon, there are several scenic highways in the coast range and the most outstanding portions of public lands have been accorded scenic highway status. The principal aim there has been to protect the view from highway. The effect is that trees are much closer to the highway than current federal standards permit, graceful curves are retained unless they are a proven hazard, and roadside vegetation is permitted near the travel surface to permit viewing of flowers, ferns and shrubs. Turnouts for scenic viewing are numerous as are roadside picnic, trail and camping facilities. In short, it is a highway for the traveler and recreationist and has helped establish Oregon's reputation as one of the most beautiful states to visit.

Along the Glenn Highway, the immediate foreground is very important because it gives the traveler his closest impression of the country and provides the base or frame of reference for viewing distant scenery. However, the mid-ground along the Glenn is crucial because of the open nature of terrain and trees. This is where unsightly powerlines, subdivisions, etc., may be sited to avoid obvious foreground locations. The background mountains are generally safe from all but the most drastic landscape modifications such as mining operations, roads or metal buildings. Scenic consideration of the Glenn Highway should include appropriate protective measures for each of the three distances.

2. A scenic assessment or study along the Glenn Highway between Palmer and Glennallen would identify the finest landscapes and recommend a scenic designation where the highway passes through public lands of this caliber. The portion between Chickaloon River and Tazlina Lake would receive close scrutiny. These are extraordinary landscapes even for Alaska.
3. Scenic protection measures would not be recommended for private lands. However, a cooperative attitude would be sought from private land owners to protect the integrity of the scenic concept, particularly where native lands constitute large blocks along the highway. Efforts would be made to show that scenic protection is in everyone's best interests.
4. Where the study recommends scenic highway designation, scenic protection measures would be the primary use or concern, but not the exclusive one. Other uses would be allowed but modified to protect visual or scenic values. For example, power lines would be consciously located out of sight, often times at no greater cost. Land disposals, gravel extractions, and timber sales would likewise be located to take advantage of terrain interruptions or vegetative screening. The viewshed from the highway would be maintained as it now is, with compatible uses allowed wherever possible or appropriate.
5. Highway reconstruction would require careful design review or oversight by landscape architects or others trained in visual assessment techniques.

6. Scenic highway protection along the Glenn would call for more scenic turnouts, observation points, trailheads, picnic and camping facilities and a somewhat higher level of use and enjoyment than occurs in the area at the present time. Turnouts would also reduce conflicts between sight-seeing motorists and destination-oriented motorists by accommodating travel speed differences. There would be more greenbelts on public lands along the highway and maintenance procedures would have to protect attractive roadside vegetation and keep important views open by careful thinning.

This is the essence of what a Scenic Highway designation would do for the Glenn Highway, after the study is completed and recommendations implemented. It would protect one of the world's most beautiful highways for this and succeeding generations for the enjoyment of residents, visitors and travelers. If the highway is not protected soon, the consequences of unsightly development will be irreversible.

\* \* \*

For further information contact Colour May at Sheep Mountain Lodge.

Calour O' Toole

NY 8488-C

1, Alaska 99645-



Feb 6, 1988

Massachusetts



Feb 6, 1988

Massachusetts

Sen. Jay Kertula

Box V

Juneau, Alaska

99811

SR 31

- would use portions of existing roads.

- what restrictions on other resource use in the area?

Beth

} To utilize existing highway's but not interpreted that way by DOT.

We can tighten up the language more specific => keep the highways = edu

