

HB

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<target><bill>HB 114</bill><subject>HB
114</subject><comm>SF1N26</comm></target>

Chair, Judiciary
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Trade & Tourism
Energy
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Alaska State Legislature House of Representatives



While in Session
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Representative Jay Ramras District 10

Sponsor Statement HB 114

“An Act relating to availability of state transportation facilities and state-owned or state-operated transportation modes for delivering compassionate aid.”

House Bill 114 is a compassionate aid bill that would enable the Governor to use state transportation to provide aid to Alaska communities in times of eminent disaster without declaring a disaster.

In the initial week of the 26th Legislative session, the village of Emmonak wrote a declaration of economic disaster to the Department of Commerce, Community and, Economic Development. As private and public entities worked together to raise donations of money and food for relief to Emmonak it became apparent that they were not the only village in desperate need of aid and attention. The following weeks, Representative Ramras and his staff worked with the Fairbanks and Anchorage Food Banks and local faith based organizations to raise over 30,000 pounds of food for eleven villages in Western Alaska.

Due to the current restrictions, state transportation could not be used because a disaster had not been declared. Consequently, Representative Ramras and staff had two options: 1) use the monetary donations towards transportation; thus taking away precious funds for additional food or 2) work with transportation companies to provide their services for free or discounted rates.

Ultimately, based on the collective generosity of a few transportation companies, the food was able to arrive in all of the eleven villages.

House Bill 114 would reduce the need to spend donated funds on transportation and instead, allow a sharper focus on gathering the resources needed for relief.

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House District 10

Memo

To: Senator Bert Stedman
Senator Lyman Hoffman
Co-Chairs Senate Finance Committee

From: Representative Ramras

Date: March 2, 2010

Re: HB114 – Explanation of Changes

Below is an explanation of changes to HB114 26-LS0505/R to SCSCSHB114(TRA) 26-LS0505\W:

- The proposed legislation was removed from AS 26.23.020 and was added to a new section in AS44.19 under the Office of the Governor;
- The purpose and mechanism of the legislation remains the same, however by taking it out of AS26.23.020 the Governor would not have to declare a disaster before utilizing state-owned or operated transportation modes for delivering compassionate aid in times that the Governor determines that public safety and health conditions in an area of the state require emergency assistance;
- Section (b) was amended to remove liability from the state, the Alaska Railroad Corporation and subsequent officers, agents and employees in the event of injury or death of a person or property damage resulting from assistance;
- A liability standard was added back into the bill on the House Floor
- In the Senate Transportation Committee the bill was amended to read more cleanly. It came to the committees' attention that as drafted the bill would allow state-owned equipment to be loaned to non-profit corporations. The language was reworded to cover use of state-owned and state-operated equipment. This also would take the liability back under current statutes and case law.

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AVCP
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Comments for the record
26th Alaska State Legislature
House Transportation / Finance Committee

by

Myron P. Naneng, Sr., President
Regarding HB 114

February 9, 2009

BILL: HB 114

SHORT TITLE: USE STATE TRANS FACILITY
FOR DISASTER AID

BILL VERSION:

STATUS DATE: 02/04/09

CURRENT STATUS: (H) TRA

THPN FIN

SPONSOR(s): REPRESENTATIVE(s) RAMRAS, Dahlstrom, Millett, Johansen, Edgmon, Petersen, Holmes, Foster, Johnson, Tuck, Groenborg, Salmon, Coghill, Thomas, Joudé, Munez

TITLE: "An Act relating to availability of state transportation facilities and state-owned or state-operated transportation modes for delivering compassionate aid during a disaster emergency."

- Atkaschak
- Atiak
- Alakanak
- Andreafsky
- Aniak
- Atmautluak
- Bethel
- Bill Moore's St.
- Chefornek
- Chevak
- Chunathbuiak
- Chuloonawick
- Crooked Creek
- Eek
- Emmonak
- Georgetown
- Goodnews Bay
- Hamilton
- Hooper Bay
- Lower Katsikag
- Upper Katsikag
- Katgluk
- Kipnuk
- Kongiganak
- Kotlik
- Kwethluk
- Kwigillingok
- Lime Village
- Marshall
- Mekoryuk
- Mtn. Village
- Napaimute
- Napaklak
- Napaklak
- Newtok
- Nightmute
- Nunakuyak
- Nunam Iqua
- Nunapitchuk
- Obogamiut
- Oscarville
- Palomut
- Pilot Station
- Pitkin's Point
- Platinum
- Quinhagak
- Red Devil
- Russian Mission
- Scammon Bay
- Sleetmute
- St. Mary's
- Stony River
- Tulskalak
- Tuntutuliak
- Tennak
- Umanmiut

We at the Association of Village Council Presidents, Inc. (AVCP) are grateful for Representative Ramras and the co-sponsors of HB 114 in an effort to make use of State transportation resources to ship out compassionate aid to remote, rural Alaska communities in our Yukon Kuskokwim region.

My name is Myron Naneng, I am President of our regional non-profit corporation made up of 56 federally recognized Tribes in the YK Delta. While energy and food relief has been pouring into our communities suffering from food shortages and crippling fuel prices, the efforts have until this point remained primarily by private citizens and groups. We would also like to recognize and thank the redirect of donated Energy Rebates under the United Way.

In the last several weeks, Representative Jay Ramras, has focused on directing some of his food drive activities for relief to our communities. We appreciate his efforts, and are sorry that he, along with other private donors, has been burdened with the shipping expense of getting this compassionate aid out to our remote villages. Our calls to the Governor's office to address our energy crisis have largely gone ignored, and this bill, along with SB 88 and SB 91 finally has State efforts come into play.

Last week, we testified in favor of extending the PCE program and instituting a fuel cap on costs beyond \$3 a gallon. Since early last summer, tribal leaders as well as myself were justifiably concerned about our coming winter since we were forced to prepay our winter fuel purchases for our tank farms at the highest costs of oil on record.

Because we are roadless, all of our villages have to import fuel by barge or by air in emergencies. In most cases, we have no choice but to sign no-fault contracts with fuel vendors if weather or acts of god prevent a scheduled delivery. Some of our villages, with human resources turnover or other constraints, are unable to make their fuel orders in concordance to State programs such as the bulk fuel loan in time to lock in at more agreeable rates. Factors such as these aggravate the already challenging nature of providing light and heat to our communities with little or no energy infrastructure.

With continued and full funding by the Legislature of the Renewable Energy Fund coupled with possible federal stimulus infrastructure funds, we may be looking at a reality where accessible energy sources come to fruition in a matter of years, rather than a matter of decades. With affordable energy at the village level, a failed fishing season would not break us as badly as this hard winter has shown.

Feb. 9. 2009 4:11PM

No. 9118 P. 3/3

Though Governor Palin herself has not directly acknowledged the fishery or fuel crisis in our region, in her response to the U.S. Army's reduced retirement payments to 26 Alaska Native Elders who had served in the Territorial Guard during WWII, she argued:

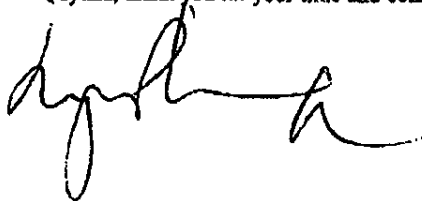
"Rural Alaskans face the highest food and energy costs in the nation, and these veterans need their retirement checks now more than ever," Governor Palin said. "Using the emergency fund to provide monetary protection for these 26 veterans is the right thing to do."

AVCP provides direct assistance to many families in our member villages that include a Housing Improvement Program, TANF and LIHEAP to name a few. Last year we assisted 1,846 households with energy assistance, and we anticipate the same number if not more appeals for the remainder of this season.

We tried to address this crisis proactively, in public statements and resolutions. We warned that the \$1,200 rebate would not adequately address the remote / rural fuel needs - and with the taxes due from as little as \$90 to over \$300 per person, we will continue to see pain in affected households this year. If we had access to affordable energy sources, all the factors we laid out for you would not have hurt us so badly this winter.

With families not having to worry about donated foods delivered from the state, it will go a long way to keeping our homes heated, and save our families from deciding between going cold or going hungry.

Quyana, thank you for your time and consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Quyana", written in a cursive style.