



Alaska State Legislature

1973

Source:

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HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 18

Relating to state ferry service between Southcentral Alaska and the continental United States, with intermediate stops in Southeast Alaska.

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

WHEREAS the state ferry system is intended to be an extension of overland highways without paralleling existing routes; and

WHEREAS the arduous two-day drive, even in the best of weather, from Anchorage to Haines, the nearest state ferry system terminal in Southeast Alaska, is scarcely a land route parallel to a cross-Gulf of Alaska ferry run; and

WHEREAS the paving of the Alaska Highway, via the Haines Cutoff, from the Alaska-British Columbia boundary to the Alaska-Yukon Territory frontier may well be still years in the future; and

WHEREAS, based on a recent survey of Alaska Highway traffic, there is an evident need now, rather than at the end of the present decade, for an Alaska ferry route between Southcentral Alaska and the "lower 48" with an intertie to the Alaska Marine Highway in Southeast Alaska; and

WHEREAS such a route already has been endorsed by the Kenai Borough Assembly, the Seward City Council and by Anchorage; and

WHEREAS such a route requires a vessel certified for ocean travel which, if constructed new, would consume several years of planning, general obligation bond ballot propositions, and construction at a probable cost in excess of \$20,000,000; and

WHEREAS the M/V Wickersham, which is certified for ocean travel, will be available for a cross-Gulf of Alaska run when the replacement vessel under construction is placed in service; and

WHEREAS, because of the Jones Act, the M/V Wickersham cannot legally operate between Southcentral and Southeast Alaska ports unless the present waiver is extended, an extension which should be fully explored; and

WHEREAS the M/V Wickersham under the temporary exemption granted by the U. S. Congress in 1972 probably can operate between Southcentral and Southeast Alaska ports; and, in any event, despite the Jones Act the vessel can legally operate when the waiver expires from Southcentral Alaska to Vancouver, British Columbia, which is but 150 highway miles from Seattle; and

WHEREAS, according to the "Report on Scheduling, Routing, Feasibility, and Tariffs: Alaska Marine Highway System," May, 1972, prepared for the Division of Marine Transportation, Department of Public Works by Tippetts, Abbett, McCarthy & Stratton, Consulting Engineers, the Southcentral Alaska port which offers the most advantageous northerly terminus for an intertie ferry route for convenient access to the major population center of Southcentral and Central Alaska is Seward;

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alaska Legislature that the Governor is respectfully requested to direct the Division of Marine Transportation, Department of Public Works, to study and report to the Second Session, Eighth Legislature, on the economic feasibility of utilizing the M/V Wickersham between the port of Seward, Alaska, with intermediate stops at appropriate Southeast Alaska ports, and Vancouver, B.C., which is only a short distance from the State of Washington; and be it

FURTHER RESOLVED that the Governor is respectfully requested to direct the Division of Marine Transportation, Department of Public Works, to commence planning of suitable docking and terminal facilities for the M/V Wickersham, before the summer of 1974, at Seward, and at those intermediate ports of call in Southeast Alaska lacking these compatible facilities for the M/V Wickersham.