



Alaska State Legislature

1975

Source:

HCR 41

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 41

Requesting a comprehensive study of the extension of the state ferry system into Western Alaska.

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

WHEREAS the cost of delivering freight, whether by air or surface transportation, to Western Alaska communities rapidly is becoming prohibitive; and

WHEREAS barge line service to many communities is un dependable even during the ice free season and thus does not meet the needs of Alaskans residing in isolated rural areas; freight orders frequently languish many months on the docks and in warehouses in Seattle, and only the Bureau of Indian Affairs will guarantee freight delivery when its NORTH STAR III is unable to make a scheduled port-of-call; and

WHEREAS the Eighth Alaska Legislature, Second Session, appropriated matching funds for the construction of the first of two ferries to serve communities along the Yukon River with passenger, vehicle and freight transportation services; and

WHEREAS the 1972 "Report on Scheduling, Routing, Feasibility, and Tariffs: Alaska Marine Highway System" prepared by the firm of Tippetts, Abbett, McCarthy and Stratton, Consulting Engineers, devoted less than half a page to proposals for, and the feasibility of, extension of the Alaska Marine Highway to Western Alaska ports such as Iniskin Bay, South Naknek, Dillingham, Togiak, Bethel, Hooper Bay, Alakanuk and St. Michael, asserting that consideration of ferry service be deferred until 1990, if then due to alleged absence of sufficient traffic to warrant its inauguration; and

WHEREAS, under the auspices of the Legislative Council, a

report on "Transportation in Rural Alaska" was prepared in 1972 suggesting that marine transportation afforded an opportunity for the development of a viable transportation delivery system for passengers, vehicles and freight to Western Alaska provided appropriate port facilities and distribution systems, especially to Northwest Alaska, were developed; and

WHEREAS, the legislature already subsidizes the delivery of freight to the Aleutian Islands by barge in the amount of a \$35,000 annual appropriation to the Division of Marine Transportation, Department of Public Works, and similar subsidies to other unprofitable routes of waterborne commerce, for example, Icy Straits in Southeastern Alaska (\$25,000); and

WHEREAS the Sea-Land Company delivers containerized cargo vans to Kodiak which could be used as a home port for a ferry service extension to the Alaska Peninsula, Aleutian Islands and to all of Western Alaska; and

WHEREAS the M/V TUSTUMENA can accommodate containerized vans up to 40 feet in length and is, at present, the only United States Coast Guard certificated ocean-going vessel in the state ferry system that could be employed during the ice-free months to provide periodic ferry service to Western Alaska communities with intermediate stops along the Alaska Peninsula and in the Aleutian chain;

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alaska Legislature respectfully requests the governor to direct the Department of Public Works, Division of Marine Transportation, to undertake a comprehensive study of the extension of the state ferry system into Western Alaska including, but not limited to, consideration of its feasibility, routing, tariffs, vessels, port and terminal facilities, scheduling and both construction and operation costs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the department is requested to present its findings and recommendations to the governor and to the legislature not later than 30 days after the Ninth Legislature, Second Session, convenes.