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‘Redington Trail’ Bill First to Pass Legislature **Rep. Masek’s Measure Honors “Father of the Iditarod”**

(JUNEAU) – A bill to honor “Father of the Iditarod” Joe Redington Sr. became the first bill to pass the 22nd Alaska State Legislature today.

The Senate unanimously passed HB 44, sponsored by Rep. Beverly Masek (R-Willow), concurring with the House in renaming a portion of the Knik-Goose Bay Road in Wasilla as the “Joe Redington, Sr. Memorial Trail.”

“Joe created the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race and helped it grow into a worldwide sporting event that for many people represents Alaska,” said Masek, a former Iditarod musher. “I cannot think of a more fitting way to preserve his memory than by renaming the road past his homestead in his honor.”

Widely hailed as “the Father of the Iditarod,” Redington started the famous Anchorage to Nome sled dog race in 1973. His other accomplishments include mushing his dog team to the top of Mount McKinley in 1979, finishing in the top five in the 1988 Iditarod at the age of 71, running a dog team in President Ronald Reagan’s 1984 inaugural parade, and encouraging immunization of rural Alaska children in a commemorative serum run to Nome in 1995. Redington died June 24, 1999 at age 82.

The new Joe Redington, Sr. Memorial Trail designation will apply to the first 15 miles of the Matanuska-Susitna Borough road, which passes by the Iditarod race headquarters and the homestead that served as Redington’s family home, dog lot and base of operations for years.

“Joe was always happiest when he was on the trail with his dogs, and I think he would smile to know that area mushers will now be able to run their dogs on the ‘Redington trail,’” Masek said. “It’s important for Alaskans to remember a man who played such an important part in Alaska’s history.”

The measure now goes to the governor, whose signature will enact it into law.

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