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For Immediate Release: March 28, 2002
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Senate Takes Lead in Fixing Permit Process **SB 308 Passes Senate**

(JUNEAU) – Legislation geared toward fixing Alaska’s broken coastal zone permitting process passed the Senate on Thursday with bi-partisan support.

Sen. Gene Therriault (R-Fairbanks) sponsored [Senate Bill 308](#) in response to numerous complaints from industries across the state. This legislation will make Alaska more attractive to new as well as existing industry, by giving the state’s permitting process, “clarity, consistency and timeliness,” he said.

The Alaska Coastal Management Program (ACMP), which is the current program used in setting the guidelines for issuing permits to the vast majority of Alaska’s industries, including the North Slope natural gas pipeline, has not kept up with changes in state and federal laws, Therriault said. The state’s permitting process under ACMP has not changed to embrace new laws regarding air quality, water quality, or spill prevention and response. This has complicated the permitting process by causing clarity and consistency problems. These problems can and often do cause costly delays and great frustration for those seeking permits, he said.

“For the foreseeable future, Alaska’s economy will be dependent upon the development of our natural resources,” said Therriault. “As lawmakers we must remove those aspects of our permitting system that cause unnecessary delay and expense without improving public input and accountability.”

SB 308 does make functional changes to improve Alaska’s coastal permitting process by first prohibiting the interpretation of state regulations and statutes by local governments. It also would allow the state to grant “consistency determinations” in phases, rather than all at once, for a North Slope natural gas pipeline, provided the pipeline parallels the trans-Alaskan Pipeline and the route chosen is either the Alaskan Highway route or another route that runs to Alaska tidewater.

“Moving projects like the North Slope natural gas pipeline from planning to production while protecting our state’s environment is imperative, particularly when these projects are critical to Alaska’s future prosperity and revenue,” Therriault said.

***Broadcast Note** – Sen. Therriault’s audio comments are available at www.akrepublicans.org

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