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House Says “No” to Over-The-Top Pipeline **Whitaker’s HCR 8 Opposes Northern Route for Natural Gas**

(JUNEAU) – Expressing its antipathy to a proposed natural gas pipeline route that would bypass most of Alaska, the House today passed House Concurrent Resolution 8 opposing the northern, or “over-the-top” route for such a line.

Rep. Jim Whitaker (R-Fairbanks), sponsor of HCR 8, called it the Legislature’s effort to follow its constitutional mandate to develop the state’s natural resources to provide the maximum benefit to the people.

“The Legislature has a responsibility to ensure that Alaska gas goes to market in a manner that is in the maximum best interest of the people of the state of Alaska,” Whitaker said. “That’s our obligation under the state Constitution, and it also has roots in the Statehood Compact. Given that, we need to remind ourselves from time to time that we do have this responsibility. This resolution does just that.”

The North Slope contains an estimated 35 trillion cubic feet of known natural gas deposits, and potentially up to 100 trillion cubic feet in recoverable reserves. Recent skyrocketing energy prices, combined with energy shortages on the West Coast, have highlighted renewed industry interest in bringing North Slope gas to market.

Three companies with major North Slope gas holdings – Phillips Alaska, British Petroleum and Exxon – have invested \$75 million to study the feasibility of the northern route in comparison with the southern, or highway route along the trans-Alaska Pipeline, then southwest along the Alaska Highway to link with gas pipeline networks in the Lower 48.

HCR 8 makes it plain that the state and the Legislature are pleased to support development of Alaska’s natural resources, but do want to ensure that it benefits Alaskans. Construction of a gas pipeline along the Alaska Highway route would provide the widest possible markets for the gas, would help ensure Alaskans find employment building and operating the pipeline, and would maximize revenue to the state from development, transportation and sale of the gas.

The resolution moves next to the Senate for consideration.

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