

Sponsor Statement

CSHB 8

Road Development Task Force

***“An Act establishing the Legislative Road Development Task Force;
and providing for an effective date”***

Updated: February 1, 2001

Transportation Committee Substitute for House Bill 8 establishes a Legislative Pioneer Road Development Task Force whose duties would include: research existing plans for road development in the state, identify roads that are important to Alaska's future economic development, study feasibility of developing or upgrading roads in order to promote future economic development, determine availability and source of funds to develop or upgrade those roads, review alternative funding sources for ongoing maintenance, and establish a priority ranking for projects to develop or upgrade those roads identified by the Task Force. The Task Force would include various members as described in the legislation.

Without a better transportation infrastructure, many areas in Alaska cannot be developed to their full potential. The legislation sets forth many roads the Task Force may consider. Many of these roads have been discussed by previous legislatures and these discussions have impressed on me the need for some forward thinking when it comes to road projects. We need to get roads up and going to benefit all areas of the state. Besides natural resource projects, tourism could benefit from roads to all points of the state, thus offering smaller areas more economic opportunities. While new roads could be viewed as interrupting the way of life in rural areas, it is important to remember that if those rural areas want to become viable, they need transportation access for business, industry, local communication, and commerce.

The Task Force would complete its work and make recommendations in January 2002.