

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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House of Representatives
House District 34

Sponsor Statement HB 244

Right-of-Way Denali Borough for RR Utility Corridor

“An Act relating to a grant of state land to the Denali Borough for a railroad and utility corridor and a railroad development project; repealing provisions relating to a grant of a right-of-way of land for a railroad and utility corridor to the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority; and providing for an effective date.”

4/12/01

In order to help bring about economic development in the Denali Borough, and to relieve a bottleneck at the single entrance to Denali National Park, many Alaskans have strongly supported a new route into the park -- for tourists and for Alaskans alike.

In 1998 HB 386 was signed into law, which authorized the Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority to engage in a number of economic development activities. Section 25 of the bill provided for a right of way for a railroad and utility corridor to connect Healy with the eastern boundary of Denali Park, generally paralleling the Stampede Trail.

Kantishna Holdings, Inc. was authorized to finance and complete the project. HB 386, however, did not require AIDEA to act on the provisions of Section 25, and it did not.

The **technical purpose** of HB 244 is twofold. First, it substitutes the Denali Borough for AIDEA as drafted in HB 386. Second, it cancels the AIDEA authorization in Section 25 of that bill.

The **overall purpose** of HB 244 is to create real economic development opportunity in the Denali Borough by facilitating development of a visitor-oriented railroad and other facilities by Kantisha Holdings, Inc. HB 244 is strongly supported by the Denali Borough Mayor and Assembly. HB 244 is also consistent with findings of the National Park System Advisory Board -- Denali Park Task Force for improving park access through a new Northern entry route.