

**Sponsor Statement for  
Senate Joint Resolution No. 32**

**Constitutional Amendment  
Marine/Rail Transportation Fund**

**“Proposing amendments to the Constitution of the State of Alaska  
relating to a marine and rail transportation fund.”**

[SJR 32](#) authorizes the creation of a marine and rail transportation fund and is a companion to [SB 271](#).

In 1985 the State of Alaska purchased the [Alaska Railroad](#) from the Federal Government for \$20 million dollars. This transaction came with a significant amount of excess land that assists in the operational costs of the railroad. The Alaska Railroad currently has a surplus land base. The Alaska Railroad is not currently under the executive budget act. The [Alaska Marine Highway](#) was created under the authority of the Federal Government in 1963 and was not given a land base. For the past several years the Alaska Marine Highway has relied on the general fund for costs because of lack of a capital equity base in order to make it self-sufficient.

Creating an authority and conveying an additional 500,000 acres of land would allow the excess land to generate revenue and provide a stable funding base for the Alaska Marine and Rail Transportation Authority. The idea is to reduce the requirements to fund the Alaska Marine Highway through the general fund. The overall transportation plan in Alaska would benefit from the re-organization and provide for a system to utilize both services and cut the cost of doing so. Currently the Alaska Marine Highway and the Alaska Railroad share the use of facilities in many locations.

It is my hope as sponsor of SJR 32 that it becomes legislation that will ensure a long-term, self-sufficient transportation network that serves all Alaskans.