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ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE DISTRICT 30

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HJR 14 Ver A SPONSOR STATEMENT

“Supporting the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension; supporting the increase in defensive capabilities at Fort Greely, Alaska; encouraging a renewed commitment by the Alaska Railroad to a community-minded approach to future rail expansion; and encouraging the development of critical Arctic infrastructure.”

House Joint Resolution 14 advocates for the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension, two critical projects that will enhance Alaska’s infrastructure, economic resilience, and national security. As the only U.S. state bordering the Arctic Ocean, Alaska plays a key role in Arctic strategy, defense operations, and resource development.

The Port MacKenzie Rail Extension is a cornerstone of Alaska’s long-term economic and logistical strategy. By providing a direct rail link between Interior Alaska and tidewater access at Port MacKenzie, Seward, Whittier, and Anchorage, this extension will reduce transportation costs, improve energy security, and expand market access for industries such as mining, agriculture, and natural gas. The completion of this project will not only strengthen supply chains but also increase the state’s resiliency by ensuring an alternative transportation corridor in the event of highway disruptions caused by natural disasters, such as earthquakes, or port congestion elsewhere in the state.

The Northern Rail Extension remains essential to U.S. national security, particularly with the expansion of the Arctic Mission at Fort Greely. As home to the nation’s missile defense system, Fort Greely plays a critical role in protecting the U.S. and its allies. Despite this, it is the only military base in Alaska without rail access. Completing the Northern Rail Extension will provide a reliable, cost-effective means of transporting military equipment, personnel, and supplies, reinforcing the nation’s defense posture in the Arctic as geopolitical competition intensifies.

Significant progress has already been made. Phase 1 of the Northern Rail Extension, including the Tanana River crossing, has brought the rail line within 70 miles of Delta Junction and Fort Greely. Similarly, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Alaska Railroad have completed nearly two-thirds of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension, underscoring the project’s viability and importance.

This resolution also calls for a community-minded approach to rail expansion, urging the Alaska Railroad to work transparently with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to ensure responsible development. Furthermore, HJR 14 urges Alaska’s congressional delegation to advocate for federal support in completing these essential projects, recognizing that while other Arctic nations invest heavily in infrastructure, the United States must act to maintain its leadership in the region.

HJR 14 represents a unified commitment to economic growth, national security, and Alaskan resiliency. I respectfully urge my colleagues to join me in supporting this critical resolution.