

# REPRESENTATIVE KEVIN J. McCABE

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE HOUSE DISTRICT 30

## SESSION

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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.

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 14**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

**BY REPRESENTATIVES MCCABE, Kopp, Tilton**

**Introduced: 3/21/25**

**Referred: Transportation**

**A RESOLUTION**

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

6 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

7 **WHEREAS** Alaska is the only state in the United States that borders the Arctic  
8 Ocean; and

9 **WHEREAS** the United States Department of Defense has expanded the anti-ballistic  
10 missile facility at Fort Greely, Alaska; and

11 **WHEREAS** the United States Army has developed new training range areas to  
12 support the Arctic Mission; and

13 **WHEREAS** Fort Greely is the only military base that is not currently connected to the  
14 railroad system in the state; and

15 **WHEREAS** a railroad is well suited to provide the transportation support required to

1 sustain military operations; and

2       **WHEREAS** a cost-efficient transportation system would benefit the world-class  
3 mining operations located near Delta Junction and projected mining operations near Tetlin;  
4 and

5       **WHEREAS** a cost-efficient transportation system would benefit the agricultural  
6 industry in the Delta Junction area, allowing the agricultural industry to become more cost-  
7 efficient and competitive and increasing its ability to expand; and

8       **WHEREAS** a railroad would provide a cost-efficient method of transporting goods  
9 and services for both mining and agricultural activities in the Delta Junction region; and

10       **WHEREAS** the Alaska Railroad system has the capacity to provide efficient  
11 transportation services for heavy cargo and large quantities of supplies to the Delta Junction  
12 region from the ports of Port MacKenzie, Seward, Whittier, and Anchorage and to  
13 economically deliver mining and agricultural products from the region to market; and

14       **WHEREAS** the extension of the Alaska Railroad from Port MacKenzie to Houston,  
15 Delta Junction, and Fort Greely is consistent with the long-term goals of the Alaska Railroad  
16 Corporation and the State of Alaska to extend rail service to the contiguous United States; and

17       **WHEREAS** the Alaska Railroad has already completed phase 1 of the Northern Rail  
18 Extension project by crossing the Tanana River, which brings the rail line within 70 miles of  
19 Delta Junction and Fort Greely; and

20       **WHEREAS** the Matanuska-Susitna Borough and the Alaska Railroad have already  
21 completed nearly two-thirds of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension, which brings Port  
22 MacKenzie within 33 miles of the Alaska Railroad rail line, which is in Houston and extends  
23 on to Fairbanks and the Northern Rail Extension project; and

24       **WHEREAS** the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension will reduce energy  
25 and transportation costs, improve air quality, increase the efficiency of shipping bulk  
26 commodities and materials to and from Interior Alaska, and provide direct rail access for  
27 shipments of liquefied natural gas from Cook Inlet to Fairbanks, North Pole, and beyond; and

28       **WHEREAS** the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension will enhance the  
29 state's resilience by establishing a strategic transportation alternative to ensure the continued  
30 flow of essential goods to Interior Alaska residents in the event of a disruption at any ports in  
31 the state or damage to critical highways from an earthquake or other natural disaster; and

1           **WHEREAS** the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension will increase the  
2 available supply of natural gas and reduce energy costs for industry and residential customers  
3 in many Interior Alaska communities; with increased natural gas supply, that region will  
4 realize additional opportunities for natural gas conversion, which will aid in achieving air  
5 quality attainment; and

6           **WHEREAS** the communities, neighborhoods, and individuals served and affected by  
7 rail expansions should have an active role in planning, considering alternatives, and  
8 confirming decisions made by the Alaska Railroad regarding rail expansions;

9           **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature supports the completion of the  
10 Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and the Northern Rail Extension; and be it

11           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature recognizes the urgency of  
12 developing key infrastructure and defense capabilities, considering the investments other  
13 nations have committed to the Arctic as well as the increased amount of time needed for those  
14 types of projects because of the extreme weather of the region; and be it

15           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the Alaska  
16 Railroad to renew its commitment to a community-minded approach to future rail expansions,  
17 including reporting to the legislature regarding the railroad's efforts to improve relations with  
18 private landowners, communities, and neighborhoods affected by past and current operations;  
19 and be it

20           **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the Alaska  
21 delegation in Congress to pursue the completion of the Port MacKenzie Rail Extension and  
22 the Northern Rail Extension for the purpose of securing the critical infrastructure that is  
23 necessary to improve defense capabilities in the state.

24           **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President  
25 of the United States; the Honorable JD Vance, Vice President of the United States and  
26 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the U.S. House of  
27 Representatives; the Honorable Chuck Grassley, President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate; the  
28 Honorable Pete Hegseth, United States Secretary of Defense; the Honorable Douglas Burgum,  
29 United States Secretary of the Interior; the Honorable Sean Duffy, United States Secretary of  
30 Transportation; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S.  
31 Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas Begich, U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska

1 delegation in Congress.