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Senator Ben Stevens

Senate District N

Anchorage Senator Offers AMATS Compromise *Senate Bill 260 would now add two public members*

(Juneau)—The House Transportation Committee today accepted an amendment offered by Sen. Ben Stevens to add two public members who reside within the Anchorage area to the AMATS policy board and to make legislative representatives non-voting.

“This amendment addresses concerns about the loss of local control over Anchorage’s transportation projects while preserving my intent to open up the transportation process and improve public participation,” said Sen. Stevens (R-Anchorage), sponsor of [Senate Bill 260](#).

The House Transportation Committee amended the bill and will bring it back up at a later date.

Sen. Stevens introduced SB 260 to improve the transportation planning process for Anchorage residents. It would have added two legislators from districts at least half of which are within the boundaries of the metropolitan planning area. The board currently consists of five members: the Mayor of Anchorage, two members of the Anchorage Assembly, and a representative from the State Department of Transportation and Environmental Conservation.

The amended version of SB 260 would add two public members, one appointed by the Anchorage Assembly and the other by the governor. The amendment keeps the legislative appointments to the policy board, but changes the status of the membership from voting to non-voting.

The Anchorage Assembly and the mayor have opposed this legislation for fear of losing local control over the management decisions for both state and city roads.

“The intent of adding two legislators to provide Anchorage residents with more representation on the AMATS policy board is to improve the public process,” Sen. Stevens said. “The proposed amendment offers a compromise to both meet that goal and alleviate the concerns of the mayor and assembly regarding the local control issue.”

Alaska currently has two federally recognized Metropolitan Planning Organizations required for participation in a federal transportation program: the Fairbanks Metropolitan Area Transportation system (FMATS) and the Anchorage Area Transportation Solutions (AMATS). SB 260 would establish the planning organizations under state statute. The policy board changes would apply only to AMATS.

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