Resolution 56; 1998

Alaska State Legislature

REPRESENTATIVE BILL HUDSON

State Capitol

Juneau. Alaska

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Resources Committee

Transportation Committee

Commerce Committee

Sponsor Statement

This Resolution urges the Federal Railroad Administration to transfer the Linear

Induction Motor Research Vehicle (LIMRV) to the State of Alaska. The LIMRV is

a high speed test vehicle which was used in the 1970's for obtaining

experimental data by the United States Department of Transportation. The

transfer of the LIMRV will allow for the potential development of a new industrial

and research business in Alaska. The mining will take place on Prince of Wales

Island where the only known North American source of yttrium is located, and

the processing will take place in Ketchtkan. The development of yttrium could

revitalize Ketchikan, after the loss of the pulp mill.

Yttrium is a rare earth element that is currently being purchased from foreign

sources at the current world market value of $320.000 for one pound of pure

ytirium. Power Superconductor Applications Corporation is proposing local

employment in the mining and refining, as well as in the converting the LIMRV

to their needs. Upon receipt of the LIMRV, there will be potential employment of

up to 55 persons for the conversion.

The mining and refining of yttrium would also cause further job expansion on

Prince of Wales Island. These yttrium deposits are also mixed with other rare

earth elements, which will allow Alaska further development in other minerals.

Power Superconductor Applications Corporation is also planning to establish a

high speed test facility at Annette Field on Metlakatla. This airfield makes

available long fiat strips of land and a moderate climate for the testing of the

LIMRV. Currently, there are facilities in Southeast Alaska that could be quickly

retrofitted by the Power Superconductor Applications Corporation for their

requirements for the LIMRV conversions and yttrium development. The fact that

there are current convertible facilities available, will allow for expedient

development of the project.

Alaska has a unique deposit of this valuable earth element, the development of

which could provide an opportunity for economic growth and development. 1

urge your support in this timely resolution.

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 56**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

**TWENTIETH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION**

**BY REPRESENTATIVES HUDSON, Williams, Dyson**

Introduced: 2/11798

**Referred:** Resources

**A RESOLUTION**

**1 Relating to yttrium mining and transfer of the linear induction motor research**

**2 vehicle to Alaska.**

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

**4 WHEREAS** yttrium bearing and other rare earth minerals have been identified in large

5 quantities on Prince of Wales Island, and the quantity is sufficient to establish facilities for

6 the mining of yttrium on Prince of Wales Island; and

7 WHEREAS the Prince of Wales deposits are the only known deposits of yttrium

8 bearing minerals in North America; and

9 WHEREAS, based on the present world market, one pound of 99.9999 pure yttrium

LO has a market value of $320,000; and

**[1 WHEREAS** the presence of yttrium in the state offers Southeast Alaska an economic

**12** development opportunity in the areas of mining, refining, research, and manufacturing; and

**L3 WHEREAS** yttrium mining activity on Prince of Wales Island could result in

**14** transportation of the extracted materials to the Metlakatla/Ketchikan area for further refining

and processing; and

**16 WHEREAS** the local availability of refined yttrium metal would promote the

**1 establishment** of a major research and manufacturing facility for yttrium-based products in

2 Metiakatla and Ketchikan, resulting in new career opportunities for Alaskans; and

**3 WHEREAS** products manufactured using yttrium and technology involving yttrium

4 include powerful frictionless motors and magnetic levitation equipment for use in

5 transportation systems, superconducting fault limitea^s, electromagnetic mass launchers, and

6 yttrium coated tapes and wire; yttrium wire can also be used ijn medical equipment, including

7 field magnets in MRI-scanning machines; and

**8 WHEREAS** the firm of Power Superconductor Applications Corporation, based in

9 Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, has expressed an interest in working with the state to establish

**10** manufacturing and research facilities in the Metlakatla/Ketchikan area using the local

**11** workforce and iocai facilities, including establishment of a high speed test track at the vacant

**12** Annette Field at Metiakatla; and

**13 WHEREAS** Power Superconductor Applications Corporation has requested assistance

**14** from the stale in securing use of a 30-ton linear induction mcjtor research vehicle (LIMRV)

***15*** currently in storage by the Federal Railroad Administration; and

**16 WHEREAS** the LIMRV is expected to become part of a four-year based retrofit and

17 research project involving yttrium, yttrium products, and yttrium technology; and

**18 WHEREAS** the retrofit and research project is expected to start in 1998 and is

{9 expected to lead to the establishment of a new $3,100,000' jyttrium and yttrium products

10 manufacturing facility in the Metlakatla/Ketchikan area, employiing 55 Alaskans; once transfer

**>1** of the LIMRV to the State of Alaska takes place, 15 new jobs for Alaskans are expected to

12 be established immediately; and

**13 WHEREAS** requests for funding to establish new yttrium industrial and research

**14** sectors in Southeast Alaska are not currently being made by the state;

**15 BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature would welcome a transfer of the

***16*** linear induction motor research vehicle (LIMRV) to the state as a federal contribution to

L7 establishment of a new industrial and research sector located near Metiakatla and Ketchikan.

18 the only known North American source of the valuable metal! yttrium; and be it

***',9* FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislate urges the Federal Railroad

**iO** Administration, the Alaska Congressional delegation, and the'Governor to facilitate transfer

**>1** of the LIMRV to Alaska for a period of at least four years. 0-LS1533V4

**1 COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to Ms. Jolene M. Molitoris, Administrator,

2 Federal Railroad Administration, U.S. Department of Transportation; and to the Honorable Ted

3 Stevens and the Honorable Frank Murkowski, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Don Young,

4 U.S. Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress