

Legislation to Open Up North Introduced

Legislation to help open up the northern part of the state has been introduced by Governor Hickel's administration.

Two of the four bills would set up a Northern Operators of Rail Transportation and Highways, a commission to open

up the North by surface transportation. \$30,000 would be appropriated to operate the commission.

A third bill would appropriate \$750,000 to build a resource development road

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that would connect Dunbar, Bornite, Bettles, and Liven-good. This would be a winter haul road, used when the ground and rivers are frozen.

Hickel described this type of road as "the kind of road we can break into the country with." Improvement to the route, and the building of other access trails from this one, would come later.

The final bill would dissolve the Northwest Alaska Development Commission.

Hickel contends this commission, not yet activated, is too limited in nature to fit into his overall plan.

Hickel also announced that these bills were the first step in building a railroad to the Arctic. He said that he hoped to have survey crews in the field this summer.

The first stage of the railroad would extend from Fairbanks to Kobuk (near the copper development at Bornite) the second stage would reach to Nome.

Hickel said that he hoped to have trains running on the first stretch of track out of Fairbanks within five years.