

Request for Transportation Dept. — 'NO'

Establishing a State Department of Transportation for Alaska received a firm "NO" from members and supporters of the Highway Users Federation of Alaska. Responding to a mailed ballot and fact sheet outlining both the claims for and against the proposed new State agency, the response was over 80% in opposition.

Federal objections cited included the concentration of authority and control of public funds under the proposed Commissioner of Transportation. Other objections were the weakening of legislative authority in transportation matters, less responsiveness to the public, possible diversion of highway user taxes into non-highway uses, such as mass transit.

Highway users expressed the feeling that Alaska needs more and improved highways, not a department to figure out alternatives to highways.

The Federation fact sheet to its members recognized the need for better coordination and communication between the various State agencies in planning transportation facilities and projects but pointed out that this could be accomplished administratively without the creation of a "super agency".

Bills have been introduced in both the House and the Senate to create a State Transportation Department although the Federation states that organization charts drafted within the administration for such a Department differ substantially from the wording in the legislation under consideration.