

# STATE OF ALASKA

## DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

### Alaska Commission on Aging

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March 13, 2012

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Co- Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska State Capitol, Room 518  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair  
Senate Finance Committee  
Alaska Capitol, Room 516  
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

**Subject: Support for SB 203, Energy Assistance Program & Vouchers**

Dear Chair Hoffman and Chair Stedman:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our support of SB 203, a bill to establish an energy assistance program that would issue an energy voucher to all Alaskan Permanent Fund Dividend recipients. SB 203 is an interim measure to help Alaskans manage their high utility bills until more affordable energy supplies come on line. SB 203 also requires the Executive Branch to evaluate and make recommendations for a cost efficient and effective energy assistance program to be instituted by FY2014. This legislation is sponsored by Senator Joe Thomas and co-sponsored by Senators Paskvan, Ellis, Olson, Egan, Wagoner, French, Kookesh and you, Senator Hoffman.

The price of heating fuel is expensive but especially hard felt by Alaskans on a fixed income. As the price of heating fuel increases, older Alaskans spend more of their fixed incomes on heating their homes, especially Elders who live in rural and remote communities where energy costs are the highest. During the winter, seniors often spend much of their day at home. Older adults typically experience cooler body temperatures than younger people. Many live in older and sometimes drafty homes that are less energy efficient and poorly insulated. In order to save money, some seniors turn down their thermostats way low and may even resort to closing off rooms during the winter or more dangerous practices such as using their kitchen stoves for heat. They also cut back on food and prescription medication expenditures, measures that can compromise their health and quality of life.

ACoA supports SB 203 and believes that this program will help all Alaskans with their heating bills, especially older Alaskans. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director, by phone (465-4879) or email ([denise.daniello@alaska.gov](mailto:denise.daniello@alaska.gov)) should you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,



Sharon Howerton-Clark  
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Cc: Senator Ellis  
Senator McGuire

Senator Egan  
Senator Thomas

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello  
ACoA Executive Director

Senator Olson