



SENATOR JESSE KIEHL

SB 236: Disaster Assistance Sponsor Statement

Living in Alaska is a privilege, but one that comes with costs. Chief among them is the risk of natural disasters. These disasters can upend lives, and be incredibly destructive.

Many of these tragic events do not rise to the level of a federal disaster declared by the President. SB 236 fixes two issues with aid in those state-only disasters. Under current law, Alaskans who survive a disaster can receive a mere \$21,000—half of the federal relief number—from the state to cover the costs of the damage. For many, that doesn't even come close to covering the need. Not only that, but Alaskans who are a part of a condo association can't use that relief to pay off any condo-wide damage. So, if the condo's foundation was damaged, you can't use state help pay for it—but you can replace furniture. This is a real problem for the citizens of our state.

SB 236 increases the state relief amount to the greater of \$50,000 or half the federal relief allowable. It also gives Alaskans who own a condo the flexibility to pay off their share of condo-wide expenses with that money. It's the least we can do for those striving to recover from a disaster.