

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Session: January - April
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Official Business

Sponsor Statement

HB 37 - Net Metering

With our windy coasts, untapped rivers, and huge tidal resources, Alaska has the potential to be a national leader in the development of renewable energy sources. Though the state already produces 25% of its energy from renewable sources, we can do more to promote the use of these resources to meet Alaska's energy needs. House Bill 37 is an opportunity to do just that. This legislation promotes the private investment in renewable energy systems by giving Alaskans the option of net metering.

Net metering allows grid-tied customers who generate electricity from renewable resources to receive credit from their utility for the excess power they generate beyond what they consume. HB 37 allows customers to apply these credits towards the following billing period or to sell unused credits back to the retailer. This legislation thus provides a simple arrangement that allows customers to use the excess electricity they generate to offset electricity used at other times during the billing period.

Not only does this legislation encourage Alaskans to take ownership of their own energy generation, it is an inexpensive way for the state to promote the use of renewable energy systems. Alaska is rich with renewable energy sources, and giving consumers a financial incentive to tap into them benefits both the state and the environment.

Forty states currently provide a net metering option to consumers. Though these requirements are often enacted by state utility regulators, state lawmakers may step in to enact net metering laws through legislative action. The legislatures of Washington, Oregon, and California have addressed net metering in this fashion, and I urge this body to follow their lead.

House Bill 37 is a chance to encourage Alaskans to take advantage of our renewable energy resources and an opportunity that should not be missed. I respectfully ask for your consideration of this bill and look forward to hearing your questions and concerns.