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REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

HB247: Climate Change Response Fund and Grant Program **Sponsor Statement**

Climate-related impacts have increased in frequency and severity in recent decades with significant impacts on Alaska's infrastructure, lifestyles, and environments. Recent severe storms in several regions have highlighted the vulnerability of our communities in preparing and responding to what's likely going to be more of these significant climate-related events.

Detrimental impacts have occurred to public and private infrastructure including roads, airstrips, railroads, ports and harbors, pipelines, and resource extraction facilities; buildings including public facilities and homes; shorelines; water and sanitation systems; impacts to health and culture including disease vectors, subsistence, community integrity, physical health, mental health, and public safety; alterations to natural systems and ecosystems affecting our commercial, cultural and recreational activities; and impacts to all sectors of Alaska's economy including oil & gas, fisheries, forestry, mineral development, transportation, tourism, and agriculture.

In the 21-year period beginning in 2004, there have been 78 climate-related events in Alaska (10 of which were wildfires) that have resulted in a state "disaster" declaration. These have ranged from incidents involving floods, landslides, storms, erosion, and others. These climate-related disasters have cost the State of Alaska just over \$233 million (approximately \$11 million per year) in state funds. Additionally, during this period, over \$367 million in federal funds (\$17.5 million per year) were allocated to events which were also declared a federal disaster.

HB247 takes a proactive approach to help our communities and citizens address potential climate-related impacts by creating a fund to help mitigate these future impacts. Funded through an oil surcharge of \$0.20 per taxable barrel, the fund would be administered through a grant program by the Department of Environmental Conservation and is anticipated to generate \$33 million per year for projects that would assist communities and others in preventing negative climate-related impacts.

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