

Representative Bob Herron

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House District 38
Kuskokwim & Johnson Rivers
Kuskokwim Bay & Nelson Island

Sponsor Statement

CSHB 202 (Version R), Residential Sprinkler Systems

Akiachak
Akiak
Atmautluak
Bethel
Chefornak
Eek
Goodnews Bay
Kasigluk
Kipnuk
Kongiganak
Kwethluk
Kwigillingok
Lower Kalskag
Mekoryuk
Mertarvik
Napakiak
Napaskiak
Newtok
Nightmute
Nunapitchuk
Oscarville
Platinum
Quinhagak
Toksook Bay
Tuluksak
Tununak
Tuntutuliak
Upper Kalskag

House Bill 202 is in response to a national movement to require fire sprinkler systems in one and two-family dwellings. This legislation does not take away local control from municipalities and cities, but does require a more robust public process be followed before sprinklers can be mandated in certain areas.

What HB 202 seeks to avoid is broad mandates without public involvement for home sprinkler systems that will drive up costs for consumers in areas where sprinklers may not necessarily be needed.

The CS for HB 202 (version R) requires that before a municipality can mandate sprinkler systems in new construction of residential buildings with one or two dwelling units they must first:

- Do a cost-benefit analysis
- At least 30 days prior to the first public hearing, publish a summary of the ordinance and the cost-benefit analysis and notice the time and place of each scheduled public hearing
- Hold three public hearings within a 60-day period.

Fire sprinkler systems are not cheap. Conservative estimates indicate that Alaskans could expect to pay between 3 to 5 dollars per square foot to have a system included in the construction of their new home. The NAHB estimates the entire cost of an average home sprinkler system at \$3,000.

This bill realizes there may be cases in Alaska where requiring sprinklers in one and two-family dwellings is necessary. Often, the geography at the location of new builds is such that firefighters cannot make it swiftly to a burning home. In those cases, HB 202 **would not** prohibit sprinkler mandates.

House Bill 202 will continue to allow elected officials in municipalities and cities to explore a mandate on sprinklers.