

Alaska State Legislature House of Representatives

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CS for House Bill 163(RES)

"An Act prohibiting a person from burning certain materials in a solid fuel burning device; relating to solid fuel burning device emission standards; and relating to prohibitions on the burning of solid fuels."

Committee Substitute for House Bill 163 (RES) will establish a new emission standard for solid fuel burning devices within Environmental Protection Agency designated PM 2.5 nonattainment areas in the state by allowing only the cleanest burning devices to be sold at local retail stores. Those who have a solid fuel device currently installed are grandfathered under the new emission standard and would not need to convert their device.

Currently, a PM 2.5 nonattainment area has been designated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency within the Fairbanks North Star Borough. During the winter months, air quality status can reach unhealthy levels for many of the people who reside within the nonattainment area.

CSHB 163(RES) ensures the most efficient EPA certified appliances are installed as homeowners within PM 2.5 nonattainment areas naturally upgrade their units, saving Alaskans money by reducing the cost of space heat. Additionally, by installing the best technology, air quality at a neighborhood and regional level will also improve. This is important for the overall health of the communities and for achieving federal attainment with EPA. Finally, CSHB 163(RES) guarantees an individual's right to use a solid fuel burning device in accordance with their budget and local and state law.

The consequences of not reaching EPA PM 2.5 attainment status stretch beyond health concerns. If attainment is not reached by 2014, the EPA could sanction the state of Alaska by withholding Federal highway funds amounting in the millions of dollars. This would prevent many of Alaska's roads and transportation infrastructure from being constructed or upgraded. CSHB 163(RES) is a proactive, statewide bill and will hopefully prevent additional communities from becoming a PM 2.5 non-attainment area.

Committee Substitute for House Bill 163 will be another tool to avoid EPA sanctions, while also improving energy efficiency and the health of Alaska's residents within EPA designated PM 2.5 nonattainment areas.