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House Bill 76 Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to a state residential code, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, and municipal building codes."

Alaska's current structure for building codes is confusing. Local municipal governments can adopt building codes for residential and commercial buildings, at their discretion. Additionally, multiple state agencies oversee building codes for commercial construction, and some of those aspects overlap with residential construction. As an example, the Department of Labor adopts electrical and plumbing codes. The Department of Public Safety adopts residential fire alarm and carbon monoxide codes. The Department of Education & Early Development, the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation (AHFC), and the Department of Transportation & Public Facilities have authority to adopt energy efficiency standards for commercial and residential buildings. Currently, Alaska does not have a statewide residential building code for home construction.

House Bill 76 would adopt the 2018 International Residential Code (IRC) as the state residential building code within the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation. The AHFC board can amend or update this statewide residential code at any time. Additionally, HB 76 also requires that municipalities adopt building codes to meet or exceed the 2018 IRC standard. There are no penalties or enforcement measures in this bill. It is, instead, intended as a first step toward establishing protection for consumers across the state.

Building codes make homes safer and stronger, and a consistent residential code will promote best practices in residential construction. In light of the earthquake that struck Southcentral Alaska on November 30, 2018, I urge you to support House Bill 76 to protect consumers and improve the quality of our construction.