

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SESSION

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SENATOR BERT K. STEDMAN *CO-CHAIRMAN, SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE*

Sponsor Statement

Senate Bill 140 – Version I (34-LS0489\I)

Senate Bill 140 establishes the Fire Station Grant Program, promoting a robust partnership between local communities and the state to strengthen safety and security. This matching grant program provides funding for up to 50 percent of the total project cost for constructing or renovating fire stations, supporting communities in enhancing their emergency response infrastructure.

Alaska faces unique challenges in emergency response, making it crucial for our fire stations to be well-equipped and properly maintained. Many fire stations across the state are in desperate need of replacement due to their age and deteriorating condition. Replacing these facilities is essential to strengthening their operational capabilities, improving emergency response times, and ensuring that Alaskans continue receiving the highest standard of emergency fire services. Addressing these needs involves constructing new facilities, replacing outdated stations with new buildings when more economical than renovation, and upgrading infrastructure to meet current safety standards.

It has been over a decade since the Legislature last dedicated substantial funding to support communities statewide for the construction, replacement, or major renovations of local fire stations. During that period, state assistance facilitated the development of approximately a dozen fire stations across Alaska, marking one of the most well-received capital programs in recent history. However, the need for such investments has only grown. Recognizing this critical need, the Alaska Fire Chiefs Association has identified nearly two dozen projects for the Legislature's consideration, underscoring the pressing need for this program. The Fire Station Grant Program seeks to invest in the safety of all regions of Alaska, while also ensuring support at the local level for these projects. Investing in these projects is not merely a matter of infrastructure – it's a matter of public safety and preparedness for the challenges of tomorrow.

March 17, 2026

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