

# *Alaska State Senate*

*Senator Forrest Dunbar*

**Session:**

Alaska State Capitol  
Juneau, Alaska 99801  
(907) 465-6944



**Interim:**

1500 W. Benson Blvd.  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503  
(907) 269-0246

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## **SPONSOR STATEMENT**

### *SB 50: MUNICIPAL COMPREHENSIVE PLANS: HOUSING*

Alaska is experiencing a housing crisis. The people of our state have been stretched past their limits by rapidly increasing costs and a scarcity of adequate housing. Our population is stagnant and rapidly aging. An exodus of working-age people has left the state with chronic labor shortages. Housing is a crisis in every Alaskan community, urban and rural, and every community needs to be part of resolving it.

SB 50 adds a new section to the statutory description of first- and second-class boroughs' comprehensive plans, encouraging the inclusion of a housing plan. Title 29 already recognizes the importance of community planning, with longstanding requirements for cities and boroughs to adopt and periodically update comprehensive plans. In the past, housing has often been considered a general land use issue, but the topic has reached a degree of urgency that necessitates its own consideration. This legislation will prompt boroughs to give specific attention to the housing needs of their community, critically examine their housing policies, and engage the public via the comprehensive planning process.

SB 50 is a way to broaden Alaska's response to the housing crisis. By prompting discussion, examination, and strategizing at the local level some challenges will be resolved without State intervention. Simultaneously, communities will identify remaining obstacles and local priorities, which will make any subsequent State action more effective and efficient. I urge your support for SB 50 so we can develop locally driven initiatives to repair Alaska's housing environment.