



February 10th, 2011

Dear legislator,

On behalf of the Alaska Public Interest Research Group, I'd like to express our support for House Bill 39.

As Alaska's oldest and largest consumer watchdog group, AKPIRG has been advocating for consumers and the public interest since 1974. We're a non-partisan, non-profit, citizen based grassroots organization, and we focus on research, public education and engagement, and advocacy at the state level to further our mission.

One of the issues we have consistently been concerned with is the cost and fairness of Alaskan consumers' monthly bills-- rent, mortgages, mobile phones, and of course, heat and electricity.

These Utility bills are a very significant part of the household expenses of families all over Alaska. When a utility company is compelled to refund some of the money charged to consumers, whether the amount is large or small, it should happen quickly in order to get those funds to Alaskans that need them.

HB 39 is a very simple piece of legislation that will help ensure that this is the case. By requiring utilities to outline a refund plan when they apply for a rate hike that, regardless of likelihood, there is a plan in place to make sure that the refund happens quickly and efficiently.

Alaska consumers deserve nothing less.

From our standpoint it really is as simple as that, and we believe that the bill as written provides an appropriate level of flexibility in implementation for the regulatory commission of alaska to realize the goals of this legislation.

So, on behalf of our members we urge your support and speedy action on this bill.

Sincerely,

Matt Wallace
AKPIRG Executive Director