



Representative Andi Story

Alaska State Legislature

House District 3

Upper Mendenhall Valley

Haines

Klukwan

Gustavus

Skagway

Member
House Education

Member
House State Affairs

Contact

Rep. Andi Story
Alaska State Capitol
120 4th St
Juneau, AK 99801

907-465-3744

rep.andi.story@akleg.gov

Sponsor Statement House Bill 346 Version A

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"An Act relating to grants to disaster victims."

As a state, Alaska has experienced numerous natural disasters in the past few years, including typhoons, mudslides, rockslides and floods. Many of these occurrences do not meet the requirements to receive federal disaster funds. House Bill 346 changes two things regarding state-only disasters. First, under current law, Alaskans can receive \$21,000 from the state to pay for the damage experienced in the disaster. This amount has not been changed in decades. In most cases, the amount is too low to help victims replace what was lost. This bill increases that amount to \$50,000 or half of the federal relief allowable, whichever amount is greater.

In addition, the current statute does not permit disaster victims who are condo owners to use the grants received to pay for assessments levied by the condo association to pay for condo-wide damage. For example, if the condo buildings' foundations are damaged, the condo association will impose an assessment upon each unit owner to help pay for repairs. Although this amount is significant and causes financial distress at a time that is already overwhelming, the current statute does not allow the use of state aid for that purpose. HB 346 will permit Alaskans who own condos to use the relief grant towards the assessment they owe for condo-wide damage repair costs.

I respectfully ask for support in the passage of HB 346.