



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR BILL WALKER

**Department of Environmental
Conservation**

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Senate Bill 158 adds an exception to cost recovery statute AS 46.08.070 to allow leniency to homeowners in certain cases of fuel spills. The Department of Environmental Conservation Spill Prevention and Response Division (SPAR) responds to over 2,000 releases of fuel and other hazardous substances every year. In 2017, 50 of these occurred at homes and were related to the storage of home heating fuel.

Why stop recovering state costs for small fuel spills?

- Homeowners are reluctant to call SPAR for fear of receiving a bill. The change would encourage the reporting of releases so the Department can appropriately respond.
- Homeowners typically lack the expertise to safely clean up a release and cannot afford to pay a professional contractor to manage cleanup for them.
- A quick response is often cheaper and more effective than a slow one.
- Heating fuel spills can impact drinking water wells and introduce unsafe vapors in a home.
- Users of heating fuel pay a surcharge when they purchase refined fuel that supports the fund used to pay for most of SPAR's work.

What is the impact?

- Currently 150 active sites would be eligible as the bill is written.
- Average state costs for these sites can range anywhere from \$200 to \$4,000.
- The legislation does not remove liability for damages or responsibility to cleanup contamination.
- The bill allows DEC to forego cost recovery when providing technical assistance to a homeowner.
- Would reduce money going into the Prevention Account of the Oil and Hazardous Substance Release Prevention and Response Fund by approximately \$60,000 a year.

