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SPONSOR STATEMENT

CSSB 96 (C&RA): “An Act relating to the Village Safe Water Act”

This bill makes the following changes to the Village Safe Water Act:

1. Raises the maximum population eligible for funding from 600 to 1000 for villages and first-class cities. This would allow those municipalities which are still facing clean water and sanitation issues to receive VSW grants despite their population growth. First Class cities Sand Point, King Cove, Hoonah and Klawock would become eligible for VSW grants.
2. Adds home rule municipalities whose population is below 1000 residents. This would allow Nenana (a Home Rule city) and the borough of Yakutat to become eligible to apply for VSW funding.
3. Changes the definition of village from “unincorporated community” to a village listed in 43 U.S.C. 1610 or 15 (ANCSA). This would make it mandatory for an applicant to have a structured government in place.

These changes to the Village Safe Water Act would direct the program funding to those regions of Alaska it was intended to help. Many villages in Alaska lack basic sanitation needs including safe sources of drinking water or hygienic means of sewage disposal.

The Department of Environmental Conservation is in full support of this bill. I urge your support the passing of this bill.