

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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HB 314 Extending the Alaska Regional Economic Assistance Program

Sponsor Statement

HB 314 extends the sunset date of the Alaska Regional Economic Assistance (ARDOR) program to July 1, 2021 and allows the designations of the 10 existing ARDORs even when state funds are not appropriated by the legislature.

The ARDOR program was established in 1988 under AS 44.33.895 to encourage the formation of regional development organizations in locations across the state. This bill aims to ensure that the ARDORs can continue their work at no cost to the state.

ARDORs are the primary economic development agencies in their regions providing support services for economic development projects.

Recognizing that the state of Alaska is in the midst of a major revenue shortage, HB 314 provides a necessary change in statute to alleviate the costly reporting and assistance requirements for DCED during years that funding is not awarded to the ARDOR program. The bill also relieves the ARDORs of their reporting requirements during years that funding is not provided by state, thus freeing up resources to focus on projects and pursuing federal and private grant funding.

HB 314 will allow the ARDORs to continue operating without state funding by extending the sunset date of the ARDOR program, which allows the ARDORs to retain their designation. The designation will enable ARDORs to seek federal and private grant funding.

HB 314 facilitates a state general fund savings while still preserving the ARDOR program, which has proven to be an effective investment into local economies throughout the state.