

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

ROBYN
Niayug
BURKE



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Sponsor Statement **House Bill 196** **Renewable Energy Grant Fund**

House Bill 196 makes several changes to the Renewable Energy Grant Fund. Primarily, it empowers the Alaska Energy Authority (AEA) to award grants directly with money that the Legislature appropriates to the Renewable Energy Grant Fund. Under current law, AEA submits a list of recommendations to the Legislature and the Legislature ultimately decides how many of the recommended grants are funded. This change streamlines the process for reviewing and reaching grant determinations for potential Renewable Energy Grant Fund projects, making affordable local power generation available to more communities across the state over time.

HB 196 also requires Alaska Energy Authority to annually solicit and review applications for Renewable Energy Grant Fund grants, and to provide technical assistance with grant preparation and submission for Alaska communities with populations less than 2,000 people that may not have a municipal or borough government able to provide such assistance.

Finally, HB 196 strengthens the Renewable Energy Fund Advisory Committee by creating a committee chair in statute and establishing the chair's authority to call meetings of the Renewable Energy Fund Advisory Committee. The Committee includes four legislators under current law and would be responsible for recommending grant determinations and prioritization to the Alaska Energy Authority under HB 196.

This legislation is designed to make the process for vetting and approving grants from the Renewable Energy Grant Fund stronger and less political, with the goal that Renewable Energy Fund Grants help provide affordable power to more Alaskan communities.

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Interim: 1078 Kiogak St, Utqiagvik, AK 99723

Rep.Robyn.Burke@akleg.gov