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SB 192-Evacuation Designation Levels

Version I Sponsor Statement

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Standardizing wildfire evacuation messaging across Alaska will minimize confusion during public alert and warning phases, helping save lives. Senate Bill 192 proposes to amend the Alaska Disaster Act to include standardized evacuation language and colors for maps and public messaging. Standardized evacuation maps clearly demonstrate closed areas for the public, something that becomes even more important when there are multiple wildfires in close proximity.

The Alaska Emergency Managers Association (AKEMA) is using this standardized language for the 2025 wildfire season and seeks to formalize the methodology through statute and regulatory codes. The proposed designations are supported by the Alaska Division of Forestry, Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management, State Fire Marshal's Office, and the Alaska Fire Chiefs' Association.

The language proposed in SB 192 would indicate evacuations stages on maps using the following designation levels:

- (1) **Level 1 Ready**, indicated in green, to alert the public that an emergency may exist in the area;
- (2) **Level 2 Set**, indicated in yellow, to alert the public that evacuation of the area is imminent.
- (3) **Level 3 Go**, indicated in red, to alert the public that a dangerous hazard exists and that an individual in the area should immediately evacuate the area.

Using these designations to clearly communicate with the public builds on the historical evacuation maps publicly distributed by multiple boroughs and the State of Alaska Division of Homeland Security & Emergency Management during the 2019 – 2024 wildland fire seasons. The state and local jurisdictions impacted by wildland fires indicated closed areas in red on evacuation maps, which illustrated the importance of standardized mapping and unified messaging that minimized potential confusion.

The benefits of standardization include supporting unified messaging for incorporated and unincorporated jurisdictions; reducing confusion when multiple fire responses may be across the landscape; and aligning with municipalities that already utilize predetermined evacuation zones.

Your support in amending these statutes helps serve our public and keep them safe.

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