

**Alaska State Legislature  
House of Representatives  
Representative Tammie Wilson**

*Interim*  
301 Santa Claus Lane  
North Pole, AK 99705  
Phone - (907) 451-2806  
Fax - (907) 451-2332



*Session*  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801  
Phone - (907) 465-4797  
Fax - (907) 465-3884

Rep.Tammie.Wilson@legis.state.ak.us

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**House Bill 323:**

**"An Act relating to the Alaska energy efficient home grant fund; and creating a grant program for converting homes in regions designated."**

House Bill 323 is intended to assist a community that is facing air quality issues as designated by the EPA through a PM 2.5 nonattainment air quality area.

HB 323 amends the Alaska energy efficient home grant fund, which is administered by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, to allow homeowners who reside within a PM 2.5 nonattainment area to be eligible for up to a \$10,000 grant so they can upgrade their inefficient and dirty oil fired heating device or non EPA certified wood stove to a cleaner, more efficient oil fired heating device or EPA certified wood stove.

An important component of HB 323 is only available to those who do not qualify for the AHFC's income based weatherization program or has not taken advantage of the energy rebate program. Instead, upon an inspection by an AHFC certified energy auditor, the homeowner will be able to receive a voucher to assist in the heating device upgrading process.

Currently, an EPA designated PM 2.5 nonattainment area has been established within the Fairbanks North Star Borough. During the winter season, the air quality status can reach levels which are unhealthy for many of the people who reside within the nonattainment area. HB 323 will help mitigate the air quality health concerns by installing cleaner burning heating devices in the homes of residents who are left out of the current weatherization programs offered by the state.

The consequences of not reaching EPA PM 2.5 attainment status stretch beyond health concerns. If attainment is not reached by 2014, the EPA could sanction the state of Alaska by withholding Federal highway funds amounting in the millions of dollars. This would prevent many of Alaska's roads and transportation infrastructure from being constructed or upgraded. HB 323 will be another tool avoid EPA sanctions, while also improving energy efficiency and the health of Alaska's residents.

