

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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SENATOR PETER A. MICCICHE

SB 209 Sponsor Statement

DISTRICTS

Anchor Point

Clam Gulch

Cohoe

Diamond Ridge

Fox River

Fritz Creek

Funny River

Halibut Cove

Happy Valley

Homer

Kachemak City

Kachemak Selo

Kalifornsky

Kasilof

Kenai

Nikolaevsk

Nimilchik

Razdolna

Ridgeway

Seldovia

Soldotna

Voznesenka

REGULATION OF SMOKING

Senate Bill 209 will protect Alaskans from the well-known health harms of secondhand smoke by amending existing state law to provide comprehensive protection for Alaskan workers and public in all indoor workplaces, businesses and public places. Current law prohibits smoking in healthcare facilities, schools, childcare facilities and public meeting rooms in government buildings, and otherwise provides smoking and non-smoking sections, which we know to be ineffective.

Bethel, Anchorage, Juneau, Barrow, Dillingham, Haines, Skagway, Petersburg, Klawock, Nome, Unalaska, and Palmer have all adopted local smoke-free laws. However, Alaska's remaining large-population centers do not have the legal health powers to enact smoke-free laws as second-class boroughs (Fairbanks North-Star Borough, Mat-Su Borough, Kenai Peninsula Borough.) An additional 70,000 Alaskans residing in unorganized areas are also not currently protected. It is therefore up to the Legislature to take the necessary action.

SB 209 is based on current local laws in Anchorage, Juneau, and Palmer, which are well established and well regarded by citizens and businesses. It does not prohibit outdoor smoking, except within certain areas near building entrances/exits, air intakes, and other specifically designated public gathering places as defined in the statute. It does not legislate hiring or employment of smokers or non-smokers. Employers and businesses can still elect to have smoke-free/tobacco-free properties (e.g., smoke-free hospital campuses). Local governments with health powers retain the authority to adopt more restrictive local provisions than the statewide law (e.g., provisions specific to locally popular public gathering places or events).

Four hundred Alaskan businesses and organizations, representing all regions of the state, have already signed on in support of a statewide smoke-free workplace law.