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CS FOR SENATE BILL NO. 56(FIN)

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY THE SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): SENATE RULES COMMITTEE BY REQUEST OF THE GOVERNOR

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

"An Act adopting the Municipal Property Assessed Clean Energy Act; authorizing municipalities to establish programs to impose assessments for energy improvements in regions designated by municipalities; imposing fees; and providing for an effective date."

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

* **Section 1.** AS 29.10.200 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

(65) AS 29.49 (energy improvement assessment programs).

* **Sec. 2.** AS 29.35.200(b) is amended to read:

(b) A first class borough may by ordinance exercise the following powers on an areawide basis:

- (1) provide transportation systems;
- (2) provide water pollution control;
- (3) provide air pollution control in accordance with AS 46.14.400;
- (4) license day care facilities;

(5) license, impound, and dispose of animals;

(6) establish an energy improvement assessment program under

AS 29.49.

* **Sec. 3.** AS 29.35.210(a) is amended to read:

(a) A second class borough may by ordinance exercise the following powers on a nonareawide basis:

(1) provide transportation systems;

(2) regulate the offering for sale, exposure for sale, sale, use, or explosion of fireworks;

(3) license, impound, and dispose of animals;

(4) subject to AS 29.35.050, provide garbage, solid waste, and septic waste collection and disposal;

(5) provide air pollution control under AS 46.14.400;

(6) provide water pollution control;

(7) participate in federal or state loan programs for housing rehabilitation and improvement for energy conservation;

(8) provide for economic development;

(9) provide for the acquisition and construction of local service roads and trails under AS 19.30.111 - 19.30.251;

(10) establish an emergency services communications center under AS 29.35.130;

(11) subject to AS 28.01.010, regulate the licensing and operation of motor vehicles and operators;

(12) engage in activities authorized under AS 29.47.460;

(13) contain, clean up, or prevent a release or threatened release of oil or a hazardous substance, and exercise a power granted to a municipality under AS 46.04, AS 46.08, or AS 46.09; the borough shall exercise its authority under this paragraph in a manner that is consistent with a regional master plan prepared by the Department of Environmental Conservation under AS 46.04.210;

(14) establish an energy improvement assessment program under

AS 29.49.

* **Sec. 4.** AS 29.35.210(b) is amended to read:

(b) A second class borough may by ordinance exercise the following powers on an areawide basis:

- (1) provide transportation systems;
- (2) license, impound, and dispose of animals;
- (3) provide air pollution control under AS 46.14.400;
- (4) provide water pollution control;
- (5) license day care facilities;
- (6) establish an energy improvement assessment program under**

AS 29.49.

* **Sec. 5.** AS 29 is amended by adding a new chapter to read:

Chapter 49. Municipal Property Assessed Clean Energy Act.

Sec. 29.49.010. Exercise of powers. A municipality that establishes a program under AS 29.49.060 may exercise powers granted under this chapter.

Sec. 29.49.020. Authorized assessments. (a) A municipality may impose an assessment under this chapter to repay the financing of qualified projects on real property located in a region designated under this chapter.

(b) An assessment under this chapter may not be imposed to repay the financing of

(1) facilities for undeveloped lots or lots undergoing development at the time of the assessment; or

(2) the purchase or installation of products or devices not permanently fixed to real property.

Sec. 29.49.030. Written contract for assessment required. A municipality may impose an assessment under this chapter only under a written contract with the record owner of the real property assessed.

Sec. 29.49.040. Establishment of program. (a) The governing body of a municipality may establish a program under this chapter.

(b) A municipality that establishes a program under this chapter may enter into a written contract with a record owner of real property in a region designated under this chapter to impose an assessment to repay the financing of a qualified project on

property of the owner. The financing repaid through assessments may be provided by a third party or, if authorized by municipal ordinance, by the municipality.

(c) If a program provides for third-party financing, when a municipality enters into a contract under (b) of this section, the municipality shall enter into a written contract with the third party providing for the municipality to service the debt through assessments.

(d) If a program provides for municipal financing, the municipality shall enter into a written contract with the record owner of the real property to finance the qualified project through assessments.

(e) The financing for which assessments are imposed may be for costs of the project, including

(1) the cost of materials and labor necessary for installation or modification of a qualified improvement;

(2) permit fees;

(3) inspection fees;

(4) lender's fees;

(5) program application and administrative fees;

(6) project development and engineering fees;

(7) third-party review fees, including verification review fees, under AS 29.49.090; and

(8) any other fees or costs that may be incurred by the property owner incident to the installation, modification, or improvement on a specific or pro rata basis, as determined by the municipality.

Sec. 29.49.050. Designation of region. (a) The governing body of a municipality may designate an area of the municipality as a region where a record owner of real property in the region may enter into a written contract to impose an assessment to repay the financing of a qualified project by the owner on the owner's property and, if authorized by the municipality program, finance the qualified project.

(b) An area designated as a region by the governing body of a municipality under this section

(1) may include the entire municipality; and

(2) must be located wholly within the municipality's jurisdiction.

(c) A municipality may designate more than one region. If multiple regions are designated, the regions may be separate, overlapping, or coterminous.

Sec. 29.49.060. Procedure for establishment of program. (a) To establish a program under this chapter, the governing body of a municipality shall take the following actions in the following order:

(1) adopt a resolution of intent that includes

(A) a finding that financing qualified projects through contractual assessments serves a valid public purpose;

(B) a statement that the municipality intends to allow property owners to make contractual assessments to repay financing for qualified projects;

(C) a description of qualified projects that may be subject to contractual assessments;

(D) a description of the boundaries of the region;

(E) a description of any proposed arrangements to make third-party financing available or any financing the municipality will provide for qualified projects;

(F) a description of municipal debt servicing procedures for any third-party financing and assessments;

(G) a notice of the report on the proposed program required under AS 29.49.070 and the location where the report is available for public inspection;

(H) the time and place for a public hearing on the proposed program; and

(I) the name of the local official who administers the program and the appropriate assessor or person who collects the proposed contractual assessments with property taxes imposed on the assessed property;

(2) hold a public hearing at which the public may comment on the proposed program and the report prepared under AS 29.49.070; and

(3) adopt an ordinance establishing the program and the terms of the

program, including each item included in the report required under AS 29.49.070, which may be incorporated by reference.

(b) A municipality may

(1) hire and set the compensation of a program administrator and program staff; or

(2) contract for professional services necessary to administer a program.

(c) A municipality may impose fees to offset the costs of administering a program. The fees authorized under this subsection may be assessed as a

(1) program application fee paid by the property owner applying to the program;

(2) component of the interest rate on the assessment in the written contract between the municipality and the property owner; or

(3) combination of (1) and (2) of this subsection.

Sec. 29.49.070. Report regarding assessment program. (a) The report for a proposed program required by AS 29.49.060 must include

(1) a map showing the boundaries of the proposed region;

(2) a form for a contract between the municipality and the property owner specifying the terms of

(A) assessment under the program; and

(B) financing provided by a third party or the municipality, as appropriate;

(3) if the proposed program provides for third-party financing, a form for a contract between the municipality and the third party regarding the servicing of the debt through assessments;

(4) a description of projects that may qualify for contractual assessments;

(5) a plan for ensuring sufficient capital for third-party financing and, if appropriate, raising capital for municipal financing for qualified projects;

(6) if bonds will be issued to provide capital to finance qualified projects as part of the program as provided by AS 29.49.140,

(A) a maximum aggregate annual dollar amount for municipal financing repaid by contractual assessments under the program;

(B) if requests appear likely to exceed the authorization amount, a priority order for ranking a property owner's application for financing repaid by contractual assessments; and

(C) a formula for calculating

(i) the interest rate and period during which contracting owners would pay an assessment; and

(ii) the maximum amount of an assessment;

(7) a method for ensuring that the period of the contractual assessment does not exceed the useful life of the qualified project that is the basis for the assessment;

(8) a description of the application process and eligibility requirements for financing of qualified projects repaid by contractual assessments under the program;

(9) a method under (b) of this section for a property owner applying to participate in the program to demonstrate the property owner's ability to fulfill financial obligations repaid by contractual assessments;

(10) a statement explaining the manner in which property will be assessed and assessments will be collected;

(11) a statement explaining the lender notice requirement under AS 29.49.080;

(12) a statement explaining the review requirement under AS 29.49.090;

(13) a description of marketing and participant education services to be provided for the program;

(14) a description of quality assurance and antifraud measures to be instituted for the program; and

(15) the procedures for collecting the proposed contractual assessments.

(b) The municipality shall establish a method by which a property owner shall

demonstrate financial ability based on appropriate underwriting factors, including

(1) verification that the property owner applying to participate in the program is

(A) the legal owner of the benefited property;

(B) current on mortgage and property tax payments; and

(C) not insolvent or in bankruptcy proceedings; and

(2) an appropriate ratio between the amount of the assessment and the assessed value of the property.

(c) The municipality shall make the report available for public inspection

(1) on the Internet website of the municipality; and

(2) at the primary governing offices of the municipality.

Sec. 29.49.080. Notice to mortgage holder required for participation.

Before a municipality may enter into a written contract with a record owner of real property to impose an assessment to repay the financing of a qualified project under this chapter, the property owner shall

(1) give the holder of a mortgage lien on the property at least 30 days' written notice of the intention of the property owner to participate in a program under this chapter before the written contract for assessment between the owner and the municipality is executed; and

(2) obtain a written consent from the holder of a mortgage lien on the property.

Sec. 29.49.090. Review required. (a) A program established under this chapter must require a review of the energy baseline conditions for each proposed qualified project and the projected energy savings to establish the projected energy savings.

(b) After a qualified project is completed, the municipality shall obtain verification that the qualified project was properly completed and is operating as intended.

(c) An independent third party must conduct both a baseline energy review and a verification review under this section.

Sec. 29.49.100. Direct acquisition by owner. The proposed arrangements for

financing a qualified project may authorize the property owner to

(1) purchase directly the related equipment and materials for the installation or modification of a qualified improvement; and

(2) contract directly, including through lease, power purchase agreement, or other service contract, for the installation or modification of a qualified improvement.

Sec. 29.49.110. Recording of notice of contractual assessment. (a) A municipality that authorizes financing through contractual assessments under this chapter shall file written notice of each contractual assessment in the real property records of the recording district in which the property is located.

(b) The notice under (a) of this section must contain

(1) the amount of the assessment;

(2) the legal description of the property;

(3) the name of each property owner; and

(4) a reference to the statutory assessment lien provided under this chapter.

Sec. 29.49.120. Lien. (a) Contractual assessments under this chapter and any interest or penalties on the assessments are liens on the property assessed and are prior and paramount to all liens except municipal tax liens and special assessments. Contractual assessment liens may be enforced as provided in AS 29.45.320 - 29.45.470 for enforcement of property tax liens.

(b) Contractual assessment liens run with the land, and that portion of the assessment under the assessment contract that has not yet become due is not eliminated by foreclosure of a property tax lien.

(c) Penalties and interest may be added to delinquent installments of the assessments in the same manner as provided in AS 29.45.250.

(d) A municipality may recover costs and expenses, including attorney fees, in a suit to collect a delinquent installment of an assessment in the same manner as in a suit to collect a delinquent property tax.

Sec. 29.49.130. Collection of assessments. The governing body of a municipality may contract with the governing body of another taxing unit to perform

the duties of the municipality relating to collection of assessments imposed by the municipality under this chapter.

Sec. 29.49.140. Bonds or notes. (a) A municipality may issue bonds or notes to finance qualified projects through contractual assessment under this chapter.

(b) Bonds or notes issued under this section may not be general obligations of the municipality. The bonds or notes must be secured by one or more of the following, as provided by the governing body of the municipality in the resolution or ordinance approving the bonds or notes:

(1) payments of contractual assessments on benefited property in one or more specified regions designated under this chapter;

(2) reserves established by the municipality from grants, bonds, or net proceeds or other lawfully available funds;

(3) municipal bond insurance, lines of credit, public or private guaranties, standby bond purchase agreements, collateral assignments, mortgages, or any other available means of providing credit support or liquidity; and

(4) any other funds lawfully available for purposes consistent with this chapter.

(c) A municipal pledge of assessments, funds, or contractual rights in connection with the issuance of bonds or notes by the municipality under this chapter is a first lien on the assessments, funds, or contractual rights pledged in favor of the person to whom the pledge is given, without further action by the municipality. The lien is valid and binding against any other person, with or without notice.

(d) Bonds or notes issued under this chapter further an essential public and governmental purpose, including

(1) improvement of the reliability of local electrical systems;

(2) reduction of energy costs;

(3) reduction of energy demand on local utilities;

(4) economic stimulation and development;

(5) enhancement of property values; and

(6) enhancement of employment opportunities.

Sec. 29.49.150. Joint implementation. (a) Any combination of municipalities

may agree to jointly implement or administer a program under this chapter.

(b) If two or more municipalities jointly implement a program, a single public hearing held jointly by the cooperating municipalities is sufficient to satisfy the requirement of AS 29.49.060(a)(2).

(c) One or more municipalities may contract with a third party, including another municipality, to administer a program.

Sec. 29.49.160. Prohibited acts. A municipality that establishes a region under this chapter may not

(1) make the issuance of a permit, license, or other authorization from the municipality to a person who owns property in the region contingent on the person entering into a written contract to repay the financing of a qualified project through contractual assessments under this chapter; or

(2) otherwise compel a person who owns property in the region to enter into a written contract to repay the financing of a qualified project through contractual assessments under this chapter.

Sec. 29.49.890. Application of chapter. This chapter applies to home rule and general law municipalities.

Sec. 29.49.900. Definitions. In this chapter,

(1) "program" means a program established under this chapter;

(2) "qualified improvement" means a permanent improvement fixed to real property and intended to decrease energy consumption or demand, including a product, device, or interacting group of products or devices that uses energy technology to generate electricity, provide thermal energy, or regulate temperature;

(3) "qualified project" means the installation or modification of a qualified improvement;

(4) "real property" means privately owned commercial or industrial real property;

(5) "region" means a region designated under this chapter.

Sec. 29.49.995. Short title. This chapter may be cited as the Municipal Property Assessed Clean Energy Act.

* **Sec. 6.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).