



Alaska Association of Fire & Arson Investigators

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Brian Balega, President
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March 1, 2016

The Honorable Gabrielle LeDoux
House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

I am writing this letter on behalf of the Alaska Association of Fire Arson Investigator in support for HB 339, Motor Vehicle Arson on Private Property, which was introduced by the House Judiciary Committee on 02/24/2016.

The Alaska Association of Fire & Arson Investigators believes that House Bill 339 and Senate Bill 187 eliminates an unforeseen loophole created in 2008 when House Bill 268 was originally created.

In short, the existing law restricts enforcement to vehicles geographically located on government lands thus eliminating law enforcement charging an individual for intentionally setting another person's vehicle on fire which is located on private property.

In one case a female was sitting in a vehicle not owned by her in the parking lot of CARRs Gambell in Anchorage. A witness took photographs of her setting a fire in the vehicle prior to leaving. The female had to be charged with a felony Criminal Mischief. The charges were eventually reduced and she pled to Criminally Negligent Burning a Class A misdemeanor. Although a felony conviction was not obtained the original charge did not accurately reflect that she intentionally used fire as a destructive weapon to destroy another person's property.

Upon the passage of this bill, it will correct this error, improve record keeping and permit proper charging by law enforcement. This bill will also allow a person's criminal history to reflect an arson conviction and provide for proper sentencing evaluation on future fire related offenses.

Brian L. Balega, President
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"Fire Prevention through aggressive investigation of every fire"
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