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Sent: Monday, April 06, 2015 11:12 PM

To: Rep. Benjamin Nageak; Rep. Geran Tarr; Rep. Bob Herron; Rep. Craig Johnson; Rep. Kurt Olson; Rep. Paul Seaton; Rep. Andy Josephson; Rep. Mike Hawker

Subject: please support HB 105

Members of the House Resources Committee:

I ask your support for HB 105 to allow more options for bringing cleaner fuel to the Interior and rural communities of northern and western Alaska for both space heating and electricity production.

In my community of Fairbanks, burning of coal is the primary means for generating electric power, but it produces mercury and other toxic emissions. Residents also burn cord wood in stoves and outdoor boilers as primary or supplemental space heating, contributing substantially to poor air quality events that have been correlated to local hospital admissions for respiratory and pulmonary illness in the last decade. The high cost of energy and local air pollution are plausibly contributing factors to recent declines in the Fairbanks population, although military deployments from Fort Wainwright and Eielson make such an inference complicated.

It is highly unlikely that presently low consumer prices for heating oil will persist, so we need a long-term solution to replacing dirty fuels. Alaska has a wealth of natural gas, but economical distribution to northern and western Alaska is a challenge.

I also ask that you explore imported propane as a good "bridge" fuel until other Alaska options for natural gas distribution are developed. Currently there is a propane glut in the Lower 48, making it cost effective in the short term. A bonus of propane is that it could be barged to villages (along major rivers or via ocean barge to coastal communities) yet does not pose the risk of spill contamination like oil in aging fuel tank farms. A professor of oil and energy economics at the University of Alaska Fairbanks recently wrote a community perspective article on propane in the Fairbanks Daily News-Miner:

http://www.newsminer.com/opinion/community_perspectives/interior-alaska-energy-why-not-propane/article_d9c5ee82-d2c2-11e4-a1ad-afe19b73508c.html

We need to consider as many options as possible to find the optimal solution. HB 105 is a step in the right direction.

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