



Representative Chris Tuck

Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 24
Juneau, AK 99801

Phone: (907) 465-2095
Toll-free: (866) 465-2095

House Bill 197: Extend Seismic Hazards Safety Commission

Sponsor Statement

Alaska is one of the most seismically active regions on earth, and the magnitude 9.2 Great Alaska Earthquake in 1964 is the largest recorded earthquake in U.S. history. The State of Alaska has worked diligently to prepare for future earthquakes to ensure the safety of the people and Alaska's infrastructure. To help with this work, the state created the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission.

House Bill 197 would extend the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission through June 30, 2028. Without passage, the commission will sunset on June 30 of this year. A recent audit of the commission found that there is a public policy need for the existence of the commission and included a recommendation to extend the commission until 2028.

The Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission brings together key government officials and volunteer experts to provide recommendations on how to improve earthquake response and mitigation. The commission works closely with state agencies, local governments, and school districts to promote earthquake safety and to disseminate information on how to reduce Alaska's vulnerability to earthquakes. During its history, the eleven-member commission has played a significant role in helping the state withstand several significant earthquakes with minimal damage and no loss of life, including the 7.1 magnitude earthquake that struck Southcentral Alaska on November 30, 2018.

The work of the Alaska Seismic Hazards Safety Commission is vital to the ongoing efforts to prepare for future earthquakes and to mitigate their impacts. The commission's work can continue with the passage of House Bill 197.

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