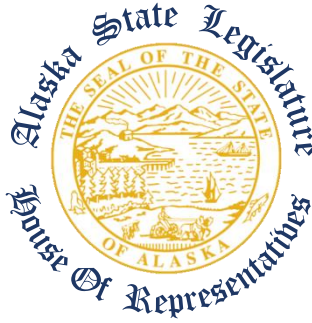


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Sponsor Statement

House Bill 29

"An Act relating to liability of an electric utility for contact between vegetation and the utility's facilities; and relating to vegetation management plans."

House Bill 29 seeks to protect electrical utility ratepayers by protecting the utilities from damages outside of the utilities' control, specifically- vegetation outside of the utilities Right-of-Way. The bill further defines the responsibility of a utility providing electrical service to the public, and the damages in which they can be held liable for.

HB 29 makes clear in statute that a utility offering electrical service to the public may not be held liable for property damage, death, or personal injury resulting from contact between vegetation and the utility's facilities, unless the vegetation is located entirely within the boundaries of the utility's right-of-way or if the utility fails to have a written vegetation management plan or fails to comply with that plan.

To specify, an electric utility is not to be held liable for damages that come about as a result of natural events moving vegetation into a facility's right-of-way. Nor is a utility to be held liable for damages caused by an unaffiliated person, or party, recklessly endangering a facility by causing vegetation to fall into its right-of-way.

Hb 29 protects responsible electric utilities from being held liable for the cost of damages caused by vegetation that they either cannot control or are not permitted to maintain, consequently, this also protects Alaska electric customers from having to bear the brunt of those costs through their rates in a state where electric utility service costs are already so high.

If you have additional questions, please contact Jesse Logan in my office at 907-465-4859.