

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

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Senate Bill 202 - Sponsor Statement

"An Act relating to the renewable energy grant fund and recommendation program; and providing for an effective date."

SB 202 extends the authorization of the Renewable Energy Grant Fund and Recommendation Program setting a new sunset date of June 30, 2033.

The Renewable Energy Fund (REF) program was originally established in 2008 with the passage of House Bill 152 and later received a ten-year extension in 2012, in both cases receiving a unanimous vote of the legislature. The REF is managed by the Alaska Energy Authority in coordination with a nine-member Renewable Energy Fund Advisory Committee.

Since its inception, the Renewable Energy Fund has distributed over \$275 million dollars in grant funds for qualifying and competitively-selected renewable energy projects across the state. These REF grants have been supplemented by both federal and local funding to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars. These combined funds help to stabilize and reduce energy costs for consumers by supporting renewable energy projects in both urban and rural communities across Alaska.

As technology has improved and the available renewable energy sources have expanded, so too has the number of proposed projects. In the last application cycle, 39 applications from around the state were submitted. As energy prices climb, it is important to take advantage of all alternative sources of energy and heat, especially in our most vulnerable communities. The Renewable Energy Grant Fund is an important tool which supports Alaskan communities meet their energy needs.

Please join me in supporting SB 202 and a ten-year extension of the Renewable Energy Fund, which will continue to support energy independence in more of Alaska's communities.