

Alaska State Legislature

SESSION:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801
(907) 465-4949



INTERIM
1500 W Benson Blvd
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 269-0244

SENATOR JAMES KAUFMAN

Sponsor Statement for SB 33 – Bill Version A

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

SB 33 extends the sunset date of the Renewable Energy Grant Fund and Recommendation Program to 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 unanimous vote in 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 \$300 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 rural and urban communities across Alaska.

As technology has improved and the available renewable energy sources have expanded, so too has the number of proposed projects. In Round 14, 39 applications from around the state were submitted and 27 were recommended to receive funding. Thirty-one applications were submitted for Round 15, which closed in December 2022. 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.

SB 33 will extend the Renewable Energy Grant Fund for a further 10 years, supporting energy independence in more of Alaska's communities.