

HOUSE BILL NO. 362

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY THE HOUSE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

Introduced: 3/2/12

Referred: Community and Regional Affairs, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 "An Act relating to an Alaska Water and Sewer Task Force; and providing for an
2 effective date."

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 * **Section 1.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section
5 to read:

6 LEGISLATIVE FINDINGS. The legislature finds that an estimated 6,028 families in
7 the state do not have safe potable water or safe sanitation systems in their homes. Of the
8 \$102,000,000,000 earned by the state in oil revenue between 1977 and 2009, less than half of
9 one percent was expended on rural water and sewer projects. In an effort to protect the public
10 health and welfare of the state's citizens and promote healthy communities, the legislature
11 finds that it is the responsibility of the legislature to ensure that safe and sustainable water and
12 sewer systems are provided for all state residents.

13 * **Sec. 2.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
14 read:

1 ALASKA WATER AND SEWER TASK FORCE. (a) The Alaska Water and Sewer
2 Task Force is created in the legislative branch.

3 (b) The task force consists of nine members, as follows:

4 (1) one member of the senate appointed by the members of the bush caucus;

5 (2) one member of the house or representatives appointed by the members of
6 the bush caucus;

7 (3) one member of the senate appointed by affirmative vote of a majority of
8 the full membership of the senate;

9 (4) one member of the house of representatives appointed by affirmative vote
10 of a majority of the full membership of the house of representatives;

11 (5) one member of the public who is a civil engineer appointed by the
12 members of the bush caucus;

13 (6) one member who represents an appropriate federal agency appointed by
14 the members of the bush caucus;

15 (7) one member who represents an appropriate state agency appointed by the
16 members of the bush caucus; and

17 (8) two members of the public who reside in rural communities in the state
18 that are not connected by road or the Alaska marine highway to the main road system of the
19 state appointed by the members of the bush caucus.

20 (c) The members of the task force shall select co-chairs from the task force's
21 legislative membership; one co-chair shall be from the house of representatives and one co-
22 chair shall be from the senate.

23 (d) Task force members do not receive compensation but may receive travel and per
24 diem expenses authorized for boards and commissions under AS 39.20.180.

25 (e) The task force shall meet during and between legislative sessions to accomplish its
26 duties.

27 (f) Vacancies on the task force shall be filled in the same manner as the original
28 appointments.

29 (g) The task force shall develop and submit findings and proposed legislation
30 addressing the provision of safe and sustainable water and sewer systems to all rural areas of
31 the state. The task force shall prepare a report with the task force's findings and proposed

1 legislation by December 1, 2012, and shall provide the report to the legislature on or before
2 the first day of the 2013 regular legislative session. In developing its findings and legislation,
3 the task force shall, to the extent possible,

4 (1) establish a more accurate estimate of the number of homes without safe
5 water and sewer systems;

6 (2) determine the state's needs in providing safe water and sewer systems to
7 rural residents and establish a methodology for determining which projects should be
8 prioritized among those needs;

9 (3) explore which water and sewer system technologies are most appropriate
10 for use in rural communities in the state;

11 (4) research water and sewer systems used in other Arctic nations;

12 (5) determine means by which state and federal resources, funds, and agencies
13 might be better coordinated to construct, maintain, and service water and sewer systems;

14 (6) investigate and evaluate previous state and federal efforts to provide water
15 and sewer systems in rural areas of the state;

16 (7) consult with representatives of appropriate state and federal agencies
17 regarding how safe water and sewer systems might be more quickly provided to the rural
18 areas of the state; and

19 (8) hold public hearings and employ other means the task force determines
20 will best solicit useful information on rural water and sewer needs from the residents of the
21 state.

22 (h) In this section, "bush caucus" means a group of legislators that represents rural
23 areas of the state.

24 * **Sec. 3.** The uncodified law of the State of Alaska is amended by adding a new section to
25 read:

26 **TRANSITION.** The task force shall begin work as soon as a majority of its
27 membership has been appointed.

28 * **Sec. 4.** Sections 1 and 2 of this Act are repealed July 1, 2013.

29 * **Sec. 5.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).