

HOUSE BILL NO. 209

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

TWENTY-NINTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE FOSTER

Introduced: 4/19/15

Referred: Community and Regional Affairs, Finance

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act relating to an Alaska Water and Sewer Advisory Committee; and providing for**
2 **an 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 over 6,000 families in the state
7 do not have safe potable water or safe sanitation systems in their homes. Of the over
8 \$100,000,000,000 earned by the state in oil revenue since 1977, less than half of one percent
9 was expended on rural water and sewer projects. In an effort to protect the public health and
10 welfare of the state's citizens and promote healthy communities, the legislature finds that it is
11 the responsibility of the legislature to ensure that safe and sustainable water and sewer
12 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 ADVISORY COMMITTEE. (a) The Alaska Water
2 and Sewer Advisory Committee is created in the legislative branch.

3 (b) The advisory committee 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 of 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 advisory committee shall select co-chairs from the advisory
21 committee's legislative membership; one co-chair shall be from the house of representatives
22 and one co-chair shall be from the senate.

23 (d) Members serve without compensation and may not receive travel and per diem
24 expenses.

25 (e) The advisory committee shall meet during and between legislative sessions to
26 accomplish its duties. Meetings of the committee may be conducted by telecommunication or
27 electronic communication.

28 (f) Vacancies on the advisory committee shall be filled in the same manner as the
29 original appointments.

30 (g) The advisory committee shall develop and submit findings and proposed
31 legislation addressing the provision of safe and sustainable water and sewer systems to all

1 rural areas of the state. The advisory committee shall prepare a report with the advisory
2 committee's findings and proposed legislation by December 1, 2016, deliver the report to the
3 senate secretary and the chief clerk of the house of representatives, and notify the legislature
4 that the report is available on or before the first day of the 2017 regular legislative session. In
5 developing its findings and legislation, the advisory committee shall, to the extent possible,

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

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

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

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

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

16 (6) investigate and recommend strategies to protect public investments in rural
17 water and sewer systems and promote the long-term operational life of rural water and sewer
18 systems by ensuring, to the greatest extent practicable, that the systems can be maintained by
19 local personnel and with local resources;

20 (7) investigate and evaluate previous state and federal efforts to provide water
21 and sewer systems in rural areas of the state;

22 (8) consult with representatives of appropriate state and federal agencies
23 regarding how safe water and sewer systems might be more quickly provided to the rural
24 areas of the state; and

25 (9) hold public hearings and employ other means the task force determines
26 will best solicit useful information on rural water and sewer needs from the residents of the
27 state.

28 (h) In the preparation of the report described in (g) of this section, the advisory
29 committee may only use existing legislative resources and staff.

30 (i) In this section, "bush caucus" means a group of legislators that represents rural
31 areas of the state.

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

3 TRANSITION. The advisory committee shall begin work as soon as a majority of its
4 membership has been appointed.

5 * **Sec. 4.** Sections 1 and 2 of this Act are repealed July 1, 2017.

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