



Alaska State Legislature

Representative John Harris

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House Bill 395 **Sponsor Statement**

[HB 395](#) was designed to resolve concerns many Alaskans have with coal bed methane development in the areas of property rights, water quality assurance, and local involvement of residents.

Many concerns have been raised recently by residents of the Mat-Su Borough and Homer area through a series of public forums. All sponsors worked diligently, listening to public input from numerous community hearings, while drafting this legislation. It is the responsibility of the State to find a balance, where possible, between the rights of property owners and responsible resource development.

This bill requires that:

- 1) Public comment and other routes of access be considered prior to executing a lease.
- 2) The integrity of the affected water supply is protected.
- 3) Public notice be given prior to the award of a lease.
- 4) Monthly fees are paid to the owner per wellhead/compressor.
- 5) Noise from field operation is mitigated.

Finally, language is proposed to close current regulatory loopholes allowing the operators to extract natural gas deeper than the 3,000 foot definition of shallow natural gas. This clarification is necessary to provide Alaskans the guarantee that conventional natural gas resources will not be extracted without going through the competitive bid process.