

SPONSOR STATEMENT

HB 360

“An Act relating to the regulation of public accommodation water supply systems.”

House Bill 360 directs the Department of Environmental Conservation to regulate small public water systems to ensure that the public’s water supply is safe and clean.

Approximately 100,000 Alaskans get their water from small public water systems. These public water systems are too small to be regulated by EPA but are bigger than a private well. Approximately 3,000 of these small public water systems serve public facilities like day care or residential care facilities and office buildings.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), the number of water borne outbreaks related to water sources not covered under the National Safe Drinking Water Act has increased 50% since 1998. The increase is attributed to rapid community growth, on-site waste disposal systems and faulty well design. A national study of 5,000 small water systems showed 42% contaminated with fecal coliform. Drinking Water can be contaminated with a variety of things that potentially are fatal including fecal coliforms, nitrates, E. Coli and Cryptosporidium.

While Alaskans may assume that the water they drink is safe and sanitary, the water used in many restaurants, day care facilities and other public places is often untested and could be contaminated. By monitoring and establishing standards for small public water systems the Department of Environmental Conservation will be able to respond to complaints from the public, ensure drinking water is safe and be prepared to respond to an emergency.