

# Alaska State Legislature

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## Representative Jay Ramras House District 10

*Co-Chair, House Resources Committee • Vice-Chair, Economic Development Tourism & Trade • Member, House State Affairs • Member, Joint Armed Services Committee*

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### **Ramras Asks for Quick Reaction to Energy Needs Crisis**

(FAIRBANKS) – Representative Jay Ramras (R-Fairbanks), Co-Chair of the House Resources Committee is asking several departments within the Administration to move quickly in assisting Alaskans with the higher cost of energy. His “Energy Ease” proposal is a three-step plan that will help with the most basic needs as the cold winter months approach.

“We have several options that, in combination, will ease the financial concerns many Alaskans are facing,” said Representative Ramras. “I have spoken with the Department of Revenue’s Tax Division to implement a quick elimination of taxes on motor, boat and aviation fuel. This could represent a reduction of as much as eight cents per gallon. I appreciate the efforts that my colleague Rep. Bob Lynn started with his letter, but I believe the governor can accomplish this through Executive Order in a very expedited manner. I have also been talking with the Division of Forestry to allow easier and quicker permitting for individuals and businesses to cut firewood in areas ravaged by fires during the past few years. Several million acres of land have burned, leaving thousands of cords of dried dead firewood. Alaskans are used to wood heat and having access to this fuel will be a tremendous cost-savings advantage.”

In addition to the increases in the cost of heating fuel, many of the state’s retail distributors are being asked to tighten their credit requirements on individuals. The state’s two primary wholesale distributors of heating fuel are concerned that many individual customers will have to make long term payments to their retailers to cover the added expense and do not want that delay to be passed on to them.

Representative Ramras would like the Alaska Industrial Development & Export Authority (AIDEA) to establish a loan program for retail distributors that will allow them to maintain their current customer credit requirements and accept extended payments.

“Alaskans pay their bills, but the sudden rise in fuel costs have made those payments increase. As an example, 100 gallons of heating fuel cost approximately \$100 two years ago, \$150 dollars a year ago, and today that amount is more likely to be \$270. This is just heating fuel and salaries have not increased to offset this added expense. State government needs to step in and help in the short term, especially while it is earning additional income from higher oil prices,” Representative Ramras said.

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