



Alaska State Legislature Senate Majority News

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Energy Cost Relief Bills Up For First Hearing *Bipartisan Effort to Help Alaskans Cope With Energy Bills*

(Juneau) - The Senate State Affairs Committee will hold hearings Thursday on legislation to return some of this year's record oil revenues back to Alaskans to help with soaring home heating costs this winter. SB 214 and SB 215 will be heard in the Senate State Affairs Committee at 3:30 pm.

Sen. Gene Therriault (R-North Pole) and Sen. Albert Kookesh (D-Angoon) are sponsoring both bills.

"The sudden and unprecedented rise in energy costs has hurt Alaskan families and all sectors of the economies they support. This two bill package will help mitigate the damage both in the long and short term," said Sen. Therriault.

SB 214 provides funds for the existing weatherization and power cost equalization programs. "Weatherization is an investment that saves energy reduces costs for our most vulnerable residents. Without PCE the struggling economies in rural Alaska would crash completely and many people would be without power all together," said Sen. Kookesh.

Additionally, SB 214 provides funding for a one-time energy payment of \$250 dollars to recipients of the 2005 Permanent Fund Dividend.

Senate Bill 215 establishes the distribution mechanism for the \$250 dollar energy payment using the state's PFD system.

While both Sen. Kookesh and Sen. Therriault agree the PFD list may not be the perfect delivery system, they are confident it does meet the objective of a dependable disbursement system. Using the PFD distribution system maximizes efficiency by minimizing bureaucracy.

"With revenue pouring into state coffers, it seems reasonable to use a small portion of the benefit to ease the strain on Alaskan families," said Sen. Therriault, noting that the Department of Revenue reports more than \$3.4 billion in oil revenues alone in 2005. (Source: *Fall 2005 Revenue Sources Book*)

WHO: Senate State Affairs Committee
WHAT: Energy Cost Relief Legislation
WHEN: Thursday, January 26, 2006 @ 3:30 pm
WHERE: State Capitol Building, Beltz Committee Room #211

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