



THE STATE
of **ALASKA**
GOVERNOR SEAN PARNELL

Department of
Health and Social Services

ALASKA COMMISSION ON AGING

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February 8, 2013

Representative Tammie Wilson
Alaska Capitol, Room 412
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Subject: Support for HB 35, Low Interest Loan Program for Home Heating System Improvements

Dear Representative Wilson:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our support for HB 35, a bill sponsored by you and Representatives Thompson, Higgins, Isaacson, and Kreiss-Tomkins to establish a low-interest loan program for all homeowners, regardless of income, that allows them to convert to an energy efficient heating system at an affordable cost. HB 35 is also co-sponsored by Representatives Kawasaki, Peggy Wilson, and Kerttula.

The high cost of energy is a statewide problem. The price of heating fuel is expensive but especially hard felt by Alaskans on a fixed income. During the winter, older people often spend much of their day at home. They typically experience cooler body temperatures than younger people. Many seniors live in older homes, which are often poorly insulated, and have inefficient heating systems. In order to save money, some seniors turn down their thermostats way low and may even resort to closing off rooms during the winter or more dangerous practices such as using their kitchen stoves for heat. They also cut back on food and prescription medication expenditures in order to afford energy to heat their homes. These cost-cutting measures can compromise senior health and quality of life, which can be avoided, by replacing the old furnace with a new cost-efficient heating system.

ACoA supports passage of HB 35 and believes that this program will help all Alaskans with their heating bills, especially older Alaskans on a fixed income. Many low-income seniors do not have the cash reserves to afford the purchase and installation of a new, energy efficient heating system. HB 35 provides an affordable means for all Alaskans to purchase heating systems to address escalating heating costs. We thank you for your sponsorship and support of this bill. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director, by phone (465-4879) or email (denise.daniello@alaska.gov) should you have questions or require additional information.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Paula Pawlowski in black ink.

Paula Pawlowski
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Denise Daniello in blue ink.

Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director