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## Alaska State Legislature



### Senate Resources Committee

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## ***Senators Urge Acceptance of \$28.6 Million Based on New Information***

Alaska May Already Comply with Requirements to Accept \$28.6 Million in State Energy Program Funds

(ANCHORAGE) – Senators [Bill Wielechowski](#) (D-Anchorage) and [Lesil McGuire](#) (R-Anchorage), Co-chairs of the Senate Resources Committee, on Monday revealed new information to Governor Palin, again urging her to accept \$28.6 million in energy funds to address Alaska's ongoing energy crisis and to position Alaska as a world leader in renewable energy.

Last Friday, legislators received new information from the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), confirming that Alaska can meet State Energy Program funding requirements through local energy standards, rather than a “one-size-fits-all” statewide code. In fact, Missouri submitted a letter to DOE stating that it will meet the requirements through local codes and is now set to receive its share of the funds.

“This new information should satisfy the Governor's concerns about a universal energy code,” Senator Wielechowski said. “Alaska may already meet the requirements for receipt of these funds on local levels throughout the state, and local codes are enough to satisfy the Department of Energy. It is clear that many communities across Alaska have energy codes and feel these funds are important.”

New data from municipalities and communities across the state indicate that Alaska is most likely already meeting the State Energy Program funding requirements. Of the 92% of Alaskans who live in communities with populations of 2,500 or more, 52% live in communities with energy codes in place and 68% live in communities with building codes in place. Communities with energy codes include Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Nome, Petersburg, Palmer, Seward, Valdez and Skagway. Ketchikan, Soldotna and Wrangell are in the process of adopting energy codes. The Mat-Su Borough does not have an official energy code, yet most homes there are built to meet five star energy rating standards, according to Rich Boothby, Fire Code Official for the Mat-Su Borough.

Including structures funded by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation and the Denali Commission, Alaska is very likely already in compliance with the State Energy Program funding requirement that 90% of new and renovated building spaces meet energy efficiency standards.

“I appreciate the Governor's reluctance to accept federal funding if there are costly and burdensome strings attached, but we have taken a closer look at our communities and found that we already meet or are near meeting the energy program requirements. There's little reason to decline millions in funding that could help curb energy costs in Alaska, the state with the highest energy costs in the nation,” said Senator McGuire. “With eight years, we most certainly will be there, if we aren't already.”

Letters requesting acceptance of these funds have been received from the Alaska Municipal League, AARP, the Municipality of Anchorage, the City of Ketchikan and the City of Juneau. More letters are coming, including one the Mat-Su Borough is sending today.

For more information or to see the letters from the communities, contact Senator Wielechowski or Shelly Morgan at 907-269-0183, or Senator McGuire or Trevor Fulton at 907-269-0250.

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# ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

## Senate Resources Committee

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May 11, 2009

The Honorable Sarah Palin  
Governor  
State of Alaska  
Capitol Building  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Governor Palin,

Late last Friday, the legislature received new information from the U.S. Department of Energy (USDOE) confirming that Alaska can meet the requirements for receipt of \$28.6 million in State Energy Program stimulus funds through adoption of local energy standards, rather than a statewide energy code. Attached is the letter Missouri sent to USDOE accepting the funds based on local codes as well as USDOE's confirmation that this approach is acceptable. Alaska could craft a similar letter and receive our share of these funds, without adopting a statewide code.

We also received new data last week from municipalities and other communities indicating that Alaska is most likely already meeting the State Energy Program funding requirement. Ninety-two percent of Alaskans live in larger communities with populations of 2,500 or more. Of those, 52% live in communities which already have energy codes in place, including Anchorage, Fairbanks, Juneau, Nome, Petersburg, Palmer, Seward, Valdez and Skagway. Ketchikan, Soldotna and Wrangell are in the process of adopting energy codes. Petersburg adopted the code specifically because of the number of structures funded by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation in that community.

Of those living in larger communities, 68% live in communities with building codes in place, which means that they have the mechanism in place for monitoring and enforcing an energy code should they choose to do so.

The above figures do not include structures funded by the Alaska Housing Finance Corporation, which are built throughout Alaska. These structures plus any funded by the Denali Commission all meet energy standards.

This combined information leads us to believe that we are already likely compliant with the energy efficiency standards required by the State Energy Program funding guidelines. Commercial buildings in the larger urban centers alone will get us very close to meeting

compliance with 90% of new and renovated square footage. If we are not already meeting the requirements today, we are so close that we could easily meet them within the required timeframe.

The \$28.6 million in State Energy Program funds will stimulate Alaska's economy on multiple levels: reducing energy costs through energy efficiency and renewable energy projects; providing jobs and promoting energy efficient construction and renovation; and allowing for grant and incentive programs related to renewable energy and energy efficiency.

We have received letters from the Alaska Municipal League, AARP, Ketchikan, Anchorage, and Juneau encouraging acceptance of these funds.

It is very exciting to realize that Alaska likely already meets or is very close to meeting the requirements of the State Energy Program. Based on this new information, we respectfully ask that you accept these needed funds so that Alaska can use them to address our energy needs rather than sending them to another state.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lesil McGuire", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Senator Lesil McGuire

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Wielechowski", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Senator Bill Wielechowski