

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPT. OF HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES

Alaska Commission on Aging

April 6, 2009

The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
Alaska State Capitol, Room 518 and Room 516
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

SARAH PALIN, GOVERNOR

P.O. BOX 110693
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99811-0693
PHONE: (907) 465-3250
FAX: (907) 465-1398

Subject: Support for CSSB 116, Appropriation for Energy Assistance

Dear Chair Hoffman and Chair Stedman:

The Alaska Commission on Aging (ACoA) is pleased to offer our support for CSSB 116, a bill to make a special appropriation for energy assistance to assist Alaskans of modest means with their heating bills who qualify under the Low Income Heating Assistance Program and the Alaska Heating Assistance Program administered by the Division of Public Assistance, under the Department of Health and Social Services. This legislation is sponsored by the Senate Finance Committee.

Many older Alaskans, the majority of whom spend their day at home, are spending increasingly more of their fixed incomes on heating their homes related to rising energy costs. Due to biological changes associated with aging, older adults experience a cooler body temperature than younger adults. Some Alaska seniors live in older homes that are drafty and not well-insulated and may resort to more dangerous measures such as using their kitchen stoves for heat or turning down their thermostats to unsafe temperatures to save money on their utility bills.

ACoA appreciates your sponsorship of CSSB 116 to provide additional assistance to Alaskans of modest means, including many elderly persons, with their heating bills. ACoA also believes that this legislation would be of great assistance to rural Alaskans who spend much of their incomes for heating fuel because they live in communities where energy costs are substantially higher. Finally, we ask you to consider dedicating a portion of these funds to help nonprofit health and social service providers who are spending more of their limited resources paying heating bills when these resources would be better spent providing programs and services for Alaskans. Please feel free to contact Denise Daniello, ACoA's executive director (465-4879), should you have any questions regarding our position or desire assistance from our office. Thank you for your support of CSSB 116.

Sincerely,



Sharon Howerton-Clark
Chair, Alaska Commission on Aging

Sincerely,



Denise Daniello
ACoA Executive Director

CC: Senator Johnny Ellis
Senator Charlie Huggins

Senator Donald Olson
Senator Joe Thomas