



THE ENERGY POLICY MODERNIZATION ACT OF 2015 **A BIPARTISAN MEASURE TO POWER ALASKA AND EMPOWER ALASKANS**

On July 22, 2015, Chairman Lisa Murkowski unveiled the first draft of the Energy and Natural Resources Committee's broad, bipartisan energy bill. Featuring more than a dozen provisions that she wrote, the bill will help Alaskans produce energy, save energy, pay less for energy, and protect the reliability of our electricity supply – without raising taxes or adding to the deficit. Specific benefits for the state include:

Grid Reliability – The reliability of energy systems is essential to protecting the lives and property of Alaskans. By requiring agencies to consider the reliability impacts of a proposed rule before it is adopted, this provision will help ensure that federal regulators protect our state's interests.

Reauthorization of the Weatherization Assistance Program – Provides the state with funding to improve the energy efficiency of low-income families' homes. This program supports hundreds of jobs across Alaska and has substantially reduced energy bills for thousands of residents. Continued federal funding is particularly important given constraints on the state's budget.

Reauthorization of State Energy Program (SEP) – Provides funding directly to the state to invest in energy efficiency, renewable energy, energy emergency preparedness, and other priorities. SEP funding allows the state to leverage energy-related programs across Alaska.

State Loan Eligibility – Clarifies that the Department of Energy may provide federal loan guarantees to support the state's efforts to invest in renewable energy systems and energy efficiency improvements. This eligibility will allow the state to continue its work to reduce the high cost of energy and create more sustainable economies throughout rural Alaska.

Federal Land Management – Establishes a single inventory of federal property and land. With the federal government controlling more than 61 percent of the land in Alaska, a single federal inventory will ensure that agencies can better identify and prioritize environmental cleanups, land utilization, and land transfers.

Hydropower Improvements – Ensures federal permitting decisions for new hydropower projects are made in a timely manner to reduce unnecessary delays and costs. The reforms in this provision could help hydro projects proposed in dozens of towns throughout Southeast, Southwest, Southcentral and Interior Alaska.

Critical Minerals – Focuses on reducing America's dependence on foreign suppliers for minerals that are critical to manufacturing, defense, and other industries. Substantive permitting reforms, increases for geological surveying, and other steps will help Alaskans produce more of our world-class mineral base without suffering needless project delays.

Geothermal Energy – Reauthorizes federal research critical to the development of Alaska's geothermal resources, which could benefit up to one-fourth of Alaska's communities.

Liquefied Natural Gas Permitting – Requires the Secretary of Energy to make a decision on any LNG export application within 45 days after completion of environmental review. This will ensure that Alaska's efforts to market its stranded natural gas can proceed in a timely manner without undue federal delay.

Marine Hydrokinetic – Reauthorizes research to advance the development of electricity from ocean and river currents, tides, and waves. This program could provide grants for demonstration projects showcasing new technologies like those proposed at Igiugig, Yakutat, south of Kenai, and along the Yukon River.

Biomass – Authorizes a grant program at the Department of Agriculture to promote the production of heat and electricity from salvageable biomass resources from Alaska's forests, which could help the development of wood pellet plants proposed in communities from Thorne Bay to Fairbanks.

Methane Hydrates – Reauthorizes federal research at Prudhoe Bay to promote the development of Alaska's vast resources of frozen methane hydrates, which have significant promise as a secure, long-term source of American energy.

Grid Storage – Directs the Department of Energy to conduct research to advance grid storage technology. This program will improve the efficiency and affordability of power delivery for rural communities that are not connected to larger power systems, and could boost storage projects that are already under development in Kotzebue and Kodiak.

Hybrid Micro-Grid Systems – Promotes hybrid micro-grid technologies, including the integration of renewable resources in rural communities that currently depend on diesel for electricity generation, and promotes the kind of research being conducted at the University of Alaska's Center for Energy and Power in Fairbanks.

Energy-Water Nexus – Promotes collaboration between the public and private sectors to promote new technologies that increase efficiency and better management of water resources.

E-Prize Competition Pilot Program – Establishes a competition for the development of new technologies that will reduce energy costs through increased efficiency and conservation. This is a novel way to promote energy affordability that could benefit communities across the state.

State Oversight of Oil and Gas Programs – Directs the Bureau of Land Management to coordinate with state agencies – like the Alaska Department of Natural Resources – on land management plans surrounding oil and natural gas production to ensure the federal government takes into account Alaska's proven track record of safe, responsible production.

Energy Workforce Pilot Grant Program – Builds a strong energy workforce in Alaska to ensure continued resource production well into the future by instructing the Secretary of Energy to set up a job training pilot program.

Code Maintenance – Cleans up the U.S. Code by repealing many of the Department of Energy's redundant, overlapping, and outdated authorities. This will help ensure that federal activities align with Alaska's current priorities, not obsolete instructions from decades past.