

# ALASKA STATE SENATE

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SENATOR JOHN COGHILL

## SPONSOR STATEMENT

“Senate Bill 193(SB 193) –An Act relating to liability of an electric utility for contact between vegetation and the utility’s facilities; and relating to vegetation management plans.”

This Senate Bill further defines the responsibility of a utility providing electrical service to the public, and the damages in which they can be held liable for.

Senate Bill 193 makes clear in statute that a utility offering electrical service to the public may not be held liable for property damage, death, or personal injury resulting from contact between vegetation and the utility’s facilities, unless the vegetation is located entirely within the boundaries of the utility’s right-of-way or if the utility fails to have a written vegetation management plan or fails to comply with that plan.

To specify, an electric utility is not to be held liable for damages that come about as a result of natural events moving vegetation into a facility’s right-of-way. Nor is a utility to be held liable for damages caused by an unaffiliated person or party recklessly endangering a facility by causing vegetation to fall into its right-of-way.

SB 193 protects responsible electric utilities from being held liable for the cost of damages caused by vegetation that they either cannot control or are not permitted to maintain, consequently this also protects Alaska electric customers from having to bear the brunt of those costs through their rates in a state where electric utility service costs are already so high.