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Help for Small Miners

(JUNEAU) – Alaska miners who fail to meet the filing deadline will soon be able to correct the error without losing their claims. HB 344, sponsored by Representative Hugh Fate (R-Fairbanks), passed the Senate today by unanimous vote. The bill allows miners who fail to file their statement of annual labor and pay their rent and royalties a way to correct the error.

Under HB 344, the miner must file and pay all paperwork and fees plus a penalty of one-year's rent. This allows the miner to keep the claim provided someone else has not over filed. HB 344 will change current statute that does not allow for a cure. Filing late means the claim is abandoned and the miner must wait a full year before refiling.

According to the Department of Natural Resources about 12 miners per year miss the deadline. This bill will mean that they will still be able to keep working the claims without interruption. The small miner still remains an important part of Alaska's economy because they tend to buy supplies and hire employees locally.

Due to minor technical changes made to HB 344 in the Senate Resources Committee so now the bill will head back to the House for concurrence and then on to the Governor for his signature.

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