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Senate Approves Gas Drilling Amendments **Drilling Shallow Gas Wells Will Be Easier With Adjustments**

(JUNEAU) – The Alaska State Senate approved House Bill 69 by a vote of 19 to one on Friday. Sponsored by Rep. Vic Kohring (R-Wasilla), HB 69 will streamline the permitting process for drilling shallow gas wells to coal bed methane deposits. Kohring said that shallow gas wells should bypass drilling regulations that only apply to the deeper oil wells.

“North Slope oil wells can reach for miles,” Kohring said. “The shallow gas wells near Wasilla only reach a few hundred feet; therefore, they do not need the same strict requirements that are used on the Slope.”

HB 69 also streamlines permitting for shallow gas wells by transferring all regulation responsibilities to the state. Kohring estimates the approval time for shallow well applications to change from one or two years to 30 to 60 days. Kohring said a faster and easier application process should encourage more small natural gas operators to drill in Alaska.

“I see that it’s going to encourage more operators to come to the state and apply for well permits and be issued those permits,” Kohring said. “It’s going to result in more drilling and it’s going to be a shot in the arm economically to our state.”

After a reconsideration vote, [HB 69](#) will move to the Governor for approval.

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