

**HOUSE BILL NO. 233**

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA  
THIRTY-SECOND LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

**BY REPRESENTATIVE NELSON**

**Introduced: 1/7/22**  
**Referred: Prefiled**

**A BILL**

**FOR AN ACT ENTITLED**

1 **"An Act relating to religious services during disasters; and providing for an effective**  
2 **date."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 **\* Section 1.** AS 26.23.020 is amended by adding a new subsection to read:

5 (l) Notwithstanding any other provision of this chapter, if the governor issues  
6 an order, proclamation, or regulation under this chapter that designates any service or  
7 activity as essential, the order, proclamation, or regulation must also designate  
8 religious services as essential.

9 **\* Sec. 2.** AS 26.23.040(a) is amended to read:

10 (a) The Alaska division of homeland security and emergency management  
11 shall prepare and maintain a state emergency plan and keep the plan [IT] current. **If**  
12 **the plan designates any service or activity as essential, the plan must also**  
13 **designate religious services as essential.** The plan may include provisions for

14 (1) prevention and minimization of injury and damage caused by

1 disasters;

2 (2) prompt and effective response to disasters;

3 (3) emergency relief;

4 (4) identification of geographical areas, municipalities, cities, **and**

5 [OR] villages especially vulnerable to a disaster;

6 (5) recommendations for

7 (A) zoning, building, and other land use controls;

8 (B) safety measures for securing mobile homes or other  
9 nonpermanent or semi-permanent structures; and

10 (C) other preventive and preparedness measures designed to  
11 eliminate or reduce disasters or their impact;

12 (6) assistance to local officials in designing local emergency action  
13 plans;

14 (7) authorization and procedures for the construction of temporary  
15 works designed to protect against or mitigate danger, damage, or loss from a disaster;

16 (8) organization of manpower and chains of command;

17 (9) coordination of federal, state, and local disaster activities;

18 (10) coordination of the state emergency plan with the disaster plans of  
19 the federal government; and

20 (11) other matters necessary to carry out the purposes of this chapter.

21 \* **Sec. 3.** AS 26.23.060(e) is amended to read:

22 (e) Each political subdivision shall ensure that a written local or  
23 interjurisdictional disaster emergency plan for its area is prepared, maintained, and  
24 distributed to all appropriate officials. The disaster emergency plan must

25 **(1) include a clear and complete statement of the emergency**  
26 **responsibilities of all local agencies and officials;**

27 **(2) designate religious services as essential if the plan designates**  
28 **any other service or activity as essential.**

29 \* **Sec. 4.** AS 26.23.900 is amended by adding a new paragraph to read:

30 (10) "religious services" means rituals, worship, counseling, or  
31 ceremonies performed as part of religious observation or by a religious leader.

1      \* **Sec. 5.** This Act takes effect immediately under AS 01.10.070(c).