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**SB 16 - Sponsor Statement**

**REFUSE UTILITY REGULATIONS**

**"An Act relating to refuse utility rates and Regulatory Commission of Alaska regulations regarding refuse utilities; and providing for an effective date."**

The Regulatory Commission of Alaska (RCA) is an independent, quasi-judicial regulatory body that was formed by the legislature in 1999 to replace the Alaska Public Utilities Commission. The RCA is charged with regulating public utilities and pipeline services. Among these regulated utilities are refuse waste collection providers throughout the state. Unfortunately, due to workload and protracted legal processes it has been the experience of some refuse utility providers that rate filings have taken years consuming a large number of resources for both the companies and the RCA. The prolonged filing process has also led to consumer price shock due to the time lapse between the refuse utilities filing years and when new rates take effect.

SB 16 streamlines the rate adjustment process for refuse utilities by allowing them to make use of the already existing simplified rate filing procedure. This procedure allows utilities to apply for rate adjustments over a specified period, provided they meet certain regulatory requirements.

The RCA will be required to adopt specific regulations tailored to the unique nature of refuse utilities. These regulations will include provisions for sufficient public notice and meaningful opportunities for ratepayers to comment on rate filings. By doing so, the bill promotes transparency and accountability in the rate-setting process, safeguarding the interests of both consumers and utility providers.

SB 16 establishes a balanced approach to regulating refuse utility rates in Alaska, prioritizing fairness, transparency, public participation, and expediency.

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