Selby Explains Coastal Management Initiative

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

Last week three coastal Alaska politicians basically sent an ultimatum to the State of Alaska: reinstitute the Coastal Management Program, or the people will.

Juneau Mayor Bruce Bothello, former Homer Mayor - now Kenai Peninsula Assemblyman, Mako Haggarty, and Kodiak Island Borough Mayor Jerome Selby delivered a petition to the Lieutenant Governor seeking to put the question on next fall's statewide ballot. Selby says that if the Legislature and the Governor can't come to agreement in the upcoming session, he hopes the voters of Alaska will reinstate the program, which ended this summer.

-- (Coastal Zone 1 27 sec "We're basically saying, ‘Look ...' ... on us with no input.")

Opposition to the Coastal Management program came from Governor Sean Parnell and some members of the State House. Selby says the differences that kept the program from passing were minor - arguments over whether science or local knowledge should take precedence in making decisions. Selby says both should be used.

The State Senate passed a bill renewing the program during a special session earlier this year, but despite having an agreement in place with the House, that body failed to pass it. In addition, the governor threatened to veto the reauthorization if it passed. Kodiak's Gary Stevens, the Senate president, says the threat of the question going before voters might spur opponents into action:

-- (Coastal Zone 2 34 sec "Well I sure hope so ... avenues that could possibly work.")

Selby says the opponents claim there are other ways for the state to have input on coastal development, such as litigating projects that are disagreeable:

-- (Coastal Zone 3 32 sec "But what's left out of that ... from our perspective.")

Selby says the ballot question strategy was developed through the Alaska Municipal League over the summer, after lobbying failed to get results during the regular, and then special, sessions of the Legislature. Alaska is the only coastal state without a Coastal Zone Management Program.

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