

Stephens Explains Opposition to Borough Sea Party Contribution

Tuesday, 24 January 2012

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

When the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly held a public hearing last week on whether to make a \$1,000 contribution to the Alaska Sea Party, which is seeking to reinstate a coastal management program in Alaska, nobody in the public had any comments. When it came time for the assembly to comment, there was only one, from Assemblyman Mel Stephens.

The borough's ordinance to donate \$1,000 passed 5-to-1, with Stephens dissenting.

-- (Sea Party 1 might be to Kodiak.) 22 sec "I am philosophically opposed to ..."

Stephens also called out his fellow assembly members, all of whom voted in favor of the contribution, for not donating their own money:

-- (Sea Party 2 16 sec "If I feel strongly enough ...
according to the APOC reports.")

Of the
\$67,359 contributed to the Alaska Sea Party through the end of 2011, Stephens
pointed out that only \$800 came from individuals. The rest came from local
governments or non-governmental organizations. Almost all of the money -
\$50,000 - went to pay Scott Kohlhaas of Anchorage for consulting on the
petition signature-gathering process.

Stephens
said that even if a coastal management program is created by the legislature
this session, or if voters compel the state to create one by ballot initiative
in October, it may take years for the federal government to recognize it:

-- (Sea Party 3 47 sec "Let me say, however, that ... back
here to begin with.")

Stephens is
correct that the coastal management plan promoted by the Alaska Sea Party would
not be the same as the one that expired in July. Instead, it would more closely
resemble the coastal management program from pre-2004, before then-Governor Frank
Murkowski removed the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation from the
review process.

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