Palin Vetoed 4-Million For Kodiak Schools Seismic Projects

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Casey Kelly/KMXT

Alaska Governor Sarah Palin is being praised for delivering an impressive speech Wednesday in accepting the role of running mate to Republican presidential contender John McCain. Palin touted her executive experience and said that if elected president, McCain would use veto power in "the public interest." KMXT's Casey Kelly has a look at how well that statement is playing in Kodiak.

Since taking office in 2006, the governor hasn’t been shy about using her veto power. She’s used it to axe nearly half-a-billion dollars in projects that state lawmakers have passed in two different budgets. Kodiak state Senator Gary Stevens, who said he was “frustrated” and “perplexed” by Palin’s last round of vetoes in May, now downplays their importance.

(Stevens 1 :19s “…we’ll still get them eventually.”)

The largest local project that Palin vetoed in May was a 4-million dollar appropriation Stevens had secured for seismic upgrades to Kodiak schools. At the time Stevens questioned the governor’s decision in light of a recent earthquake in the Sichuan region of China, where thousands of children died or were injured in their schoolhouses. But today Stevens says perhaps he needed to do a better job of stressing the importance of the project to the governor.

(Stevens 2 :17s “…we can revisit in the future here.”)

Stevens, a Republican, says he plans to vote for McCain and Palin in November. But not everyone is thrilled by the prospect of a Palin vice presidency.

(Odell 1 :02s “…think she’s very qualified.”)

Betty Odell is the president of the Kodiak Island Borough Board of Education. She says she’s still

upset about Palin’s veto of the school project.

(Odell 2 :08s “…in the last couple of years.”)

A Democrat, Odell says she’ll vote for Barack Obama and Joe Biden this year.

Kodiak Island Borough Assemblywoman and Senior Citizens of Kodiak Executive Director Pat Branson also takes issue with Palin’s vetoes. She says the governor hasn’t done of very good job of explaining why certain projects get vetoed and why others are funded. In 2007, the governor cut 15-thousand dollars for facilities repair and equipment at the Kodiak Senior Center from the state supplemental budget. But it’s the school project that Branson says she’s still looking for answers on.

(Branson 1 :26s “…certainly the residents of the state.”)

Branson says she’s registered as an independent and will make the decision about which candidate she votes for based on the tickets that she feels has the strongest domestic agenda.

I’m Casey Kelly.

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