Selby Says Sea Party Will Continue Coastal Management Fight

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Jay Barrett/KMXT

The initiative on Tuesday's primary election ballot re-creating a Coastal Management Program for the State of Alaska went down handily at the polls almost two-to-one. Statewide, 64,210 people voted against Measure 2, while 39,624 voted in favor of it.

Here in District 35, which includes Kodiak, voters overwhelmingly were in favor of Measure 2, with 1,400 Yes votes and 580 No votes.

Kodiak Island Borough Mayor Jerome Selby was one of three municipal officials from the Gulf of Alaska coast to form the Alaska Sea Party, which sought to get Coastal Management reinstated. The program, which the state had for over 30 years, allows local and state say in projects on federal lands and waters along Alaska's coast.

Selby speculated that the nearly $2-million spent by industry to defeat Measure 2 was part of the reason the initiative lost, but so is a lack of awareness about coastal issues by those who don't live near the sea.

“Realistically, it’s both, because folks that are in the interior. I mean a couple of them I saw commenting on television last night that obviously have no clue what coastal management was about," Selby said. "I know the one Fairbanks guy was complaining that Fairbanks doesn’t have a seat; well, how much coast does Fairbanks have?”

Though he hasn't spoken with Juneau Mayor Bruce Bothello or former Homer Mayor Mako Haggarty, Selby says the Alaska Sea Party will likely keep trying to raise Alaskans' awareness and get the issued passed in the legislature next year.

“Well, we’ll try to get the legislature to address it again. The issue hasn’t really gone away. And the coast is sitting here at risk as we speak," he said. "So we still need to try to get folks to address the real issue that’s been there, which is the whole question of management of the resources in coastal Alaska.”

The Coastal Management Program expired a year ago when Governor Sean Parnell and the State House couldn't come to an agreement with the State Senate on renewing the plan. Alaska remains the only coastal state in the union without a coastal management program.