

Democrats Sue Over Proposed Election Map

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

The Alaska Democratic Party filed suit against the latest state election map, just in the nick of time. Yesterday was the last day to file against the Alaska Redistricting Board's proposed election map, which it approved last month.

Kodiak's Bob Brodie sits on the redistricting board and said he isn't sure of the reasoning behind the Democratic Party's filing.

"I haven't seen the latest filing with the court, allegedly from the Democrats, so I don't have any idea on what grounds their challenging the plan. They never challenged the first plan, so I don't know what's wrong with this second one."

This is the second lawsuit against the plan. The first was filed by two Fairbanks area voters. Brodie said the redistricting plan is now in the hands of the Fairbanks judge handling both lawsuits.

"He had said that when we came up with the revised plan, which we approved last month, then we would submit it to him. And then he said that people who wanted to challenge it had 30 days to file their opposition to the plan. And then I don't know what the time period is for him to make a decision whether to move ahead with the challenges or dismiss the challenges and say that the plan is OK or not."

Brodie said as he understands it, if the judge dismisses the challenges then the plan would be approved and that would be that.

"If he decides to entertain the challenges then there would be another lengthy court process where there could be discovery and depositions on both sides, a trial and probably a challenge at the supreme court and probably wouldn't be all said and done until early next year."

Brodie said some sort of plan needs to be finalized by next June, so legislators looking to run for election can know what districts to file in.

"Something will have to be decided, either another interim plan or a final adopted plan.")

In general, Brodie said he was pleased with the redistricting

board's ability to divide the state into house and senate districts. In this latest round, he said the board went to great lengths to meet with people and hear their input.

"In the final days we had, you know, up to a dozen people up in our conference room, you know, providing input on, down to the very last day almost. On Anchorage house districts and senate pairings, from both sides of the Democratic Party, the rural Natives and the Republican party, so I thought it was a good compromise, so I'm anxious to see just what it is they're objecting to."

The 2012 election map was deemed unconstitutional by the Alaska Supreme Court, but an interim plan was allowed during the 2012 races. However, it was ordered that a new map be drawn for the 2014 elections.