

## Borough Approves Land Transfer to City

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Brianna Gibbs/KMXT

Composting in Kodiak took one step closer toward reality Thursday night when the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly approved a land transfer to the city.

The city hopes to build a Class A composting facility south of the landfill on 2.36 acres of borough land. Lesser quality Class B composting is already being made at the landfill. During Thursday's regular meeting the borough assembly voted six to one in favor of the land transfer, meaning the city can get the ball rolling on planning, permitting and design.

Back in July the assembly voted against a similar land transfer, saying the city had not performed enough community outreach. Borough Manager Bud Cassidy said this go around was a different story.

"The city in fact has done that. They've met with the SWAB, they've also met with Monashka Bay Service Area. They've also travelled to the Northwest to look at other similar kinds of facilities. It's also important to dispose of that land to the city because they want to be able to design the site. Design is real critical because that site needs to be approved by DEC. They want site control, they want to be able to do geotech work to see if in fact the kind of thing they're trying to do there will happen. Is the area that's really a big fill stable enough to allow that."

Assemblyman Mel Stephens said he still has some concerns about composting, but does feel like it could be a good fit for Kodiak. He said the 2.36 acres does seem like an ideal location, but is bothered that the city will acquire the land before they determine it is suitable for composting.

"I would much prefer us to say to the city right now, hey, have at it. Go there, see if it works. And to the argument that oh well we couldn't spend that money without knowing that we're going to be able to go there. First of all, I think you're going to be able to go there. And secondly it didn't keep you from spending money on a trip to eastern Washington in the last month or so, because you didn't know then that you were going to get this."

But other assembly members, like Assemblywoman Carol Austerman, said they were pleased with the city's recent approach to the project. Austerman said she has been very impressed with how the city has

explained the process to the borough and community.

“The more that I hear about it, the more comfortable I get with the process. It is the best thing that we can do for our community. We have to do something. The city has done a lot of work and effort in making sure this is the right thing both financially and ecologically for our island community and it really is a great option for us.”

Assemblywoman Louise Stutes also said she was pleased with the city, but said she hasn’t always felt that way.

“I think you’ve worked with the service areas in really a professional manner and with staff and I think you guys have done your homework by informing the community. But it didn’t start out that way. So I hope we continue down the same road we’re on and when an issue comes up that you let the community know before the community is knocking on your door saying what’s going on. Because I know you guys can do it. You’ve done a fabulous job and I will support this.”

The transfer passed the assembly with all but Stephens voting in favor of it. The city still needs to do site work on the newly acquired land, and get the necessary permits from the Alaska Department of Environmental Conservation before any facility can be built or composting can begin.