Assembly Considering Support for Coastal Management Changes

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Erik Wander/KMXT

At its work session this evening, the Kodiak Island Borough Assembly will address a resolution supporting a House and a Senate bill aimed at restoring checks and balances to the Alaska Coastal Management Program. If passed the bill would create a Coastal Policy Board to better represent the interests of coastal communities.

Borough Manager Rick Gifford said the proposed bills would provide for more local participation in the Alaska Coastal Management Program, which deals with issues of policy, the environment and resources. He explained what the new policy would mean to a coastal community such as Kodiak.

-- (Borough Preview 1 53 sec. "It's a resolution ... and resource concerns.")

The Alaska Coastal Management Act of 1977 created a 16 member Alaska Coastal Policy Council comprised of seven State agency heads and nine local elected officials whom the governor appointed from a list of names submitted by local officials in each of 29 coastal regions defined in the act. Gifford provided examples of what types of issues fall within the program's purview, tracing Kodiak's concerns back to the Exxon Valdez oil spill.

-- (Borough Preview 2 47 sec. "Back when the had the ... into our concerns about it.")

If adopted the proposed legislation would create the Coastal Policy Board, which would consist of five public members appointed by the governor including one at-large and one member from each of four coastal district regions, Northwest, Southeast, Upper Cook Inlet and Southwest. It would also include four commissioners from the departments of environmental conservation, fish and game, natural resources and commerce, community and economic development. Gifford believes the bills would benefit Kodiak by promoting economic development by bringing local, state, and federal agencies closer together to ensure early resolution of issues related to coastal management and development.

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