



**Alaska State  
Legislature  
House and Senate  
Democrats**

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***Berkowitz Sees New Sense of Possibility  
'We're not just talking about how to cut the budget'***

JUNEAU - Minority Leader Ethan Berkowitz said today that House Democrats are looking toward this legislative session with a renewed sense of possibility.

"For the first time since I served in the Legislature," said Berkowitz, who was first elected in 1996, "we're not just talking about how to cut the budget, about what we can't do and where we're not going to go. For the first time we're starting to talk about how to repair some of the problems that have been created in this cycle of budget cutting."

Higher oil revenues have a lot to do with that, as does the possibility of getting an agreement to build a gas pipeline that benefits Alaskans.

In keeping with the new atmosphere, Berkowitz said at a House Democrats' press availability in the state Capitol, he hopes that Democrats are going to be able to be more constructive in their relations with legislative Republicans and Gov. Frank Murkowski.

"I'm hoping that this year we can adopt the kind of tone where we're a little bit more reflective, instead of reflexive in our comments," he said, "that we have a chance to weigh and understand the meaning of the proposals" before responding.

New Democratic Rep. Woodie Salmon, D-Beaver, said he hopes the session will take a closer look at rural Alaska.

"A lot of times we hear the people meeting down in Juneau and the only thing they ever talk about is the oil and Fairbanks and Anchorage, and we need to start talking about the rural people," he said. "There's a lot of people out there. And we have the resources out there, we have the coal, we have the water we have the fish."

RADIO STATIONS: Actualities of Rep. Berkowitz are available  
<http://akdemocrats.org/Audio/EBreflexive.mp3> and <http://akdemocrats.org/Audio/EBforfirsttime.mp3>

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· Additional information: [Representative Ethan Berkowitz](#) [Representative Woodie Salmon](#)

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