



Alaska State Legislature House and Senate Democrats

WEB: <http://www.akdemocrats.org>
CONTACT: Jordan Marshall, Press Secretary
PHONE: (907) 465-3842 or 321-3682
FAX: (907) 465-5125
EMAIL: press@akdemocrats.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE • March 1, 2004

Majority Blocks Gas Pipeline Funds

Bipartisan amendments to fund ANGDA fall short in State House

JUNEAU – A bipartisan effort to send badly needed funds to the Alaska Natural Gas Development Authority (ANGDA) failed late last week with 20 House Republicans opposing the amendment. Representatives Eric Croft (D-Anchorage) and John Harris (R-Valdez) sought to immediately appropriate \$1.65 million to ANGDA to study the viability of the All-Alaska Natural Gas Pipeline.

The new interest in a highway route makes funding ANGDA more imperative. ANGDA can provide an all-Alaska alternative or work with the current highway route applicants to create a "split line" concept by building an extension to Valdez for export and to Southcentral Alaska for domestic consumption.

"We have been talking about the All-Alaska project as long as I can remember," said Representative Croft. "This funding is the state's due diligence to see if the project is viable. It would be irresponsible to invest in an \$18 billion project without adequate study and it would be even more irresponsible to miss this opportunity because we never studied it."

The people of Alaska voted to create the natural gas pipeline authority in the 2002 general election, supporting a statewide ballot initiative by a 3 to 2 margin. ANGDA was given just over 19 months to complete its study on the all-Alaskan LNG line and report to the legislature on June 15, 2004. The Murkowski administration delayed appointing the board for six months and has opposed adequate funding for the ANGDA. At the end of last session, Democratic amendments to fund the authority were voted down on a party line vote. An interim legislative committee gave ANGDA \$200,000 on Oct 29, 2003, nearly a year after the voters created the authority. The Murkowski administration continues to oppose direct funding ANGDA and instead proposes giving money to itself, through the Department of Revenue, for general pipeline work.

"The Murkowski administration is flaunting the will of the people by slowly starving this voter-created entity," said Representative Croft. "Direct funding of ANGDA is our last, best chance to know, as Alaskans, if the All-Alaska natural gas route works."

After the amendment to fund ANGDA failed on the House floor, the issue was referred back to the House Finance Committee and will be taken up this week.

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