

Natural Gas Pipeline: Jobs and Economic Growth Democratic Legislators call for special session vote

ANCHORAGE -- Citing Alaska statute (AS 24.05.100), House and Senate Democrats today formally petitioned Senate President Gene Therriault (R-North Pole) and Speaker of the House Pete Kott (R-Eagle River) to poll all members of the Alaska State Legislature "on whether to return to Juneau for a special session to address developments regarding Alaska's natural gas."

Recent interest in bringing Alaska's natural gas to the West Coast market deserves, "a quick, informed, and studied response," the legislators wrote. The legislators also noted that now is a critical time for the Alaska Legislature to send a message to the United States Congress on the federal energy bill, particularly on future access and ownership issues.

"In its history Alaska always seems to be waiting on Congress, waiting on environmental lawsuits, waiting on an OK from major producers," said Representative Eric Croft (D-Anchorage). "America needs our gas and we have the opportunity to provide it without waiting on anyone."

Last week, an offer from Sempra Energy to purchase Alaska natural gas received a cool response from Governor Murkowski, and varied and ambiguous responses from Republican legislators. In contrast, Democratic legislators say the offer is worth studying.

Ordinarily, said Croft, negotiations with the state would begin with members of the executive branch. But since the administration is not having negotiations, it is incumbent upon the Legislature to commence with formal hearings to accept, reject, or propose a counter offer.

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* Please see: letter to President Gene Therriault and Speaker Pete Kott, required signatures, and Croft letter to Sempra Energy.

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