



# **Alaska State Legislature**

## **House and Senate**

### **Democrats**

WEB: <http://www.akdemocrats.org>  
CONTACT: Jordan Marshall, Press Secretary  
PHONE: (907) 269-0133 or 321-3682  
FAX: (907) 269-0132  
EMAIL: [press@akdemocrats.org](mailto:press@akdemocrats.org)

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## ***French Demands Renkes Be Removed From Gas Team***

### ***Stranded Gas Negotiator Under Ethical Cloud***

ANCHORAGE -- Senator Hollis French (D-Anchorage) today announced he has called on Governor Frank Murkowski to remove Attorney General Gregg Renkes from Alaska's Stranded Gas negotiating team. The negotiating team is charged with looking out for Alaska's interests first, and with striking the best possible deal for the state. But before his appointment to Alaska's Stranded Gas negotiating team, Renkes was a paid professional lobbyist for both British Petroleum and ARCO, the corporate predecessor of ConocoPhillips. The Attorney General's recent dealings as an industry lobbyist presents an unacceptable conflict of interest, said Senator French.

"The financial interests of the oil industry are not entirely aligned with those of the State," wrote Senator French. "Any perceived tilt towards the industry in the proposed contract is going to spark heated debate."

Senator French points out that during negotiations, the private producers and the state need to look out for their own best interests. Having Alaska represented by anyone with private financial ties with industry raises the appearance of impropriety and questions of allegiance.

"The people of the state deserve public servants who avoid even the appearance of impropriety. This holds especially true in the case of the Attorney General, whose position demands adherence to the strictest ethical standards."

Attorney General Renkes plays a prominent role in negotiations under the Stranded Gas Act, but it is up to the Legislature to approve or reject any contract brought by the state's negotiating team. "By taking away a potential source of criticism of the contract in advance, you will increase public and Legislative confidence in the product," continued French.

"I believe that the Attorney General's involvement in the negotiations could become a liability during the Legislature's consideration of the proposed contract. Rightly or wrongly, there is an ethical cloud that now hangs over General Renkes. That cloud should not be allowed to dim the prospects of an Alaskan gas line."

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