

SJR

42

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SJR 42 requests the Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to establish an EPA regional office in Alaska. Senator Murkowski proposed this idea to the Legislature during his address to the Joint Session in mid-February. Two newspaper articles are attached for your additional information.

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

NEED FOR THE EPA

Inviting a federal agency to find a sort of new home in Alaska at first glance seems contrary to the state's desire to get out from under the enduring federal yoke.

But Sen. Frank Murkowski's proposal to the federal government that it make Alaska a separate region for the Environmental Protection Agency—though it would increase the federal presence here—makes sense.

Working out of its Region 10 office in Seattle, the EPA has been making plenty of trouble for Alaskans lately.

In Fairbanks, we're struggling to come up with a plan that will clean up our air in an efficient way and satisfy the EPA too; in Anchorage, they've knuckled under to EPA threats and drawn up an air clean up plan. Throughout Alaska—including the Interior—miners are struggling to convince the EPA that wastewater discharge rules are technically impossible to comply with. If the EPA enforces them almost all miners will be forced out of business.

In Southeast Alaska, the pulp mills are having the same trouble over water discharge regulations. They'll be forced to shut down unless variances are granted.

In a speech to the Legislature last week, Sen. Murkowski urged Alaskans to "continue to struggle against outside domination—particularly from the federal government."

One way to do that, he believes, is to urge the federal officials with whom we must deal to make their headquarters in our state.

"I propose that we create a special EPA Alaska regional headquarters here in Alaska, not Seattle," the senator said. "Our new EPA region must be headed by an administrator who is vested with the knowledge and authority to create standards specifically tailored to meet Alaska's unique requirements while protecting our environment, and to insure that the beauty of our state and the lifestyle of our people is maintained."

Sen. Murkowski has been meeting with the EPA to pursue this idea. If necessary, he says, he'll introduce federal legislation to accomplish it.

Though it might make Alaskans a bit uncomfortable to invite the EPA to, in a sense, increase its presence here, we believe our state would gain from it. As it is now, EPA is well on the way to hamstringing several of our basic industries. If the officials lived and worked in the affected communities, they would be working from a different sort of background—a background of knowledge of Alaska, instead of somewhere else.

We think it's worth a try.

Murkowski seeks Alaskan EPA office

Associated Press

Juneau — The Alaska legislature should back a proposal to create an Alaska regional office of the Environmental Protection Agency, Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska told state lawmakers Thursday.

Murkowski berated the EPA for requiring two Southeast Alaska pulp mills to meet national water quality standards. The senator urged the legislature to back his proposal to create an Alaska region of EPA, forcing the agency to establish headquarters in the state.

Alaska is now part of EPA's Region X, which encompasses the Pacific Northwest.

On the subject of exporting North Slope oil, Murkowski said Congress is likely to extend the ban on overseas sales, but efforts to

overturn the Export Administration Act could pay off in the long run, Murkowski said.

"If Alaskans were to simply roll over and give up on the issue, we would fail to show Congress how important it is to us," Murkowski told a joint legislative session.

"We must continue to fight for our right to sell our natural resources in the market of our choice," Alaska's junior senator said in his fourth address to lawmakers since his 1980 election.

Murkowski explained to legislators why he thinks the odds are long on stopping Congress from extending the oil export ban, which expires at the end of the month.

"The deck is stacked, and the politics may override the merits of the export legisla-

tion," Murkowski said.

The maritime lobby has generously contributed Congressional campaign funds in order to block efforts at ending the ban, he said. Shippers oppose the export of North Slope oil because it would reduce the shipping distances for the oil, he said.

Apprehension about the pace of the federal leasing of Alaska's Outer Continental Shelf for oil and gas leasing should be balanced with the recognition that oil provides most of the state's revenues, he said.

"Before we initiate too many delays in the OCS sale process, we must remind ourselves that these sales are really only rights to look for oil," he said, and there's no guarantee fossil fuels will be found.

Anch Times 2/17

Help from the EPA

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Official Business

Alaska State Legislature
House Resources Committee

SIGN-IN

MAR. 5, 1984

SJR 42
EPA REGION 1

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