

SB

14

LEGAL SERVICES

DIVISION OF LEGAL AND RESEARCH SERVICES
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY
STATE OF ALASKA

(907) 465-3867 or 465-2450
FAX (907) 465-2029
Mail Stop 3101

State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
Deliveries to: 129 6th St., Rm. 329

MEMORANDUM

January 12, 2005

SUBJECT: Sectional summary (SB 14)

TO: Senator Gary Stevens
Attn: Doug Letch

FROM: Tamara Brandt Cook
Director *TBC*

Sec. 1. Requires an initiative question to be presented at the next regular or special municipal election that occurs at least 60 days after certification of the initiative petition. If no election is scheduled within 75 days after certification and the governing body determines it is in the best interest of the municipality, the governing body by ordinance may order a special election to be held.

Sec. 2. Technical correction.

Sec. 3. Requires a referendum question to be presented at the next regular or special municipal election that occurs at least 60 days after certification of the referendum petition. If no election is scheduled within 75 days after certification and the governing body determines it is in the best interest of the municipality, the governing body by ordinance may order a special election to be held.

TBC:med
05-026.med

Sectional

SENATE BILL NO. 14 *as amend*

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - FIRST SESSION

BY SENATOR GARY STEVENS

Introduced: 1/11/05
Referred: Community and Regional Affairs

A BILL

FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

29.26.236

1 "An Act relating to municipal initiative and referendum elections."

2 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:

3 * Section 1. AS 29.26.170(a) is amended to read:

4 (a) Unless substantially the same measure is adopted, when a petition seeks an
5 initiative vote, the clerk shall submit the matter to the voters at the next regular
6 election or, if already scheduled, special election occurring not [NO] sooner than 60
7 [45] days after certification of the petition. If no [REGULAR] election is scheduled
8 to occur [OCCURS] within 75 days after the certification of a petition and the
9 governing body determines it is in the best interest of the municipality, the
10 governing body may by ordinance order [SHALL HOLD] a special election to be
11 held on the matter before the next election that is already scheduled [~~WITHIN 75~~
12 ~~DAYS; BUT NOT SOONER THAN 45~~ ⁶⁰ DAYS AFTER CERTIFICATION].

*Amend #8
adopted*

13 * Sec. 2. AS 29.26.170(b) is amended to read:

14 (b) If the governing body adopts substantially the same measure, the petition
15 is void, and the matter initiated may not be placed before the voters.

1 * Sec. 3. AS 29.26.180(a) is amended to read:

2 (a) Unless the ordinance or resolution is repealed, when a petition seeks a
3 referendum vote, the clerk shall submit the matter to the voters at the next regular
4 election or, if already scheduled, special election occurring not [NO] sooner than 60
5 [45] days after certification of the petition. If no election is scheduled to occur
6 [OCCURS] within 75 days after [OF] certification of a petition and the governing
7 body determines it is in the best interest of the municipality, the governing body
8 may by ordinance order [SHALL HOLD] a special election to be held on the
9 matter before the next election that is already scheduled ~~WITHIN 75 DAYS,~~
10 BUT NOT SOONER THAN 60 DAYS AFTER CERTIFICATION.

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Sec. 2. Technical correction.

Sec. 3. Requires a referendum question to be presented at the next regular or special municipal election that occurs at least 60 days after certification of the referendum petition. If no election is scheduled within 75 days after certification and the governing body determines it is in the best interest of the municipality, the governing body by ordinance may order a special election to be held.

TBC:med
05-026.med

Sectional



Alaska State Legislature

Senate Majority Web: <http://www.akrepublicans.org>

Sponsor: Senator Gary Stevens
Current Version: SB 14
Contact:

Fact Sheet for: Senate Bill 14

Short Title: MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS

Summary:

- Removes the requirement that municipalities hold a special election for initiatives and referendums if no regular election occurs within 75 days after certification.
- Gives municipalities the option of:
 - holding the vote at the next regular election
 - holding the vote at an already scheduled special election occurring later than 60 days after certification of the petition
 - ordering a special election if it determines it is in the best interest of the municipality and no regular election occurs within 75 days

Benefits:

- Saves municipal governments the expense of costly special elections on every certified initiative and referendum.
- Gives municipal governing bodies the flexibility to address urgent issues in a special election if it is deemed within the best interests of the municipality.
- Maximizes local control.

Background:

If no regular election occurs within 75 days after the certification of an initiative or referendum petition, current law mandates that the governing body hold a special election between 45 and 75 days after certification. SB 14 was introduced at the request of the Kenai Peninsula Borough clerks, with support of the Alaska Municipal League, to allow municipalities to wait until the next regular election.

In one recent year, the Fairbanks North Star Borough had a total of 46 petitions filed over a period of four months. Though these petitions resulted in only one special election (at a cost of over \$35,000), the potential exists for many more at great cost to the municipality.

The provisions in this bill do not apply to Home Rule cities.

SESSION ADDRESS:
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801-1182
(907) 465-4925
Fax: (907) 465-3517
Toll Free: 1-800-821-4925

Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Legislature

INTERIM ADDRESS:
112 Mill Bay Road
Kodiak, Alaska 99615
(907) 486-4925
Fax: (907) 486-5264

Sponsor Statement for SB 14
(updated February 10, 2005)

Senate Bill 14: "An Act relating to municipal initiative and referendum elections."

SB 14 was introduced specifically to help local governments avoid costly special initiative elections and referendums brought forward by the public. In many cases, these measures are not so pressing in nature that they could not wait for the regular municipal election.

Special Elections are costly and generally result in a lower voter turnout than the regular election. In a recent year the Fairbanks North Star Borough had over 40 petitions filed in a period of 4 months. Although these petitions resulted in only one special election (at a cost of over \$60,000), there was a potential for many more special elections at great cost to the municipality.

SB 14 may result in cost savings to municipalities who could choose to wait until the next regular election, typically in October, to consider an issue. This legislation would give the municipal governing body the option of calling a special election if the Council or Assembly wished to have the initiative and referendum considered in a timelier manner.

The Alaska Municipal League and numerous municipal governments support this bill. I ask for your support of this important measure.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB 14
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: Commerce

Title Municipal Elections RDU Comm Assistance & Ec Dev (405)
 Component Community Advocacy
 Sponsor Stevens G.
 Requester Senate Community & Regional Affairs Component No. 2703

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual						
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
-----------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
-------------------------------	--	--	--	--	--	--

FUND SOURCE (Thousands of Dollars)

1002 Federal Receipts						
1003 GF Match						
1004 GF						
1005 GF/Program Receipts						
1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type--Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: _____
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This legislation would change the process for scheduling municipal elections on voter initiatives and referendums. It would not create a fiscal impact on the operations of the department.

Prepared by: Athena Logan, Special Projects Coordinator Phone 907.269.4540
 Division: Community Advocacy Date/Time 1/25/05 3:28 PM
 Approved by: Edgar Blatchford, Commissioner Date 1/25/2005
 Agency: Commerce, Community & Economic Development

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2005 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Fiscal Note Number: _____
 Bill Version: SB14
 () Publish Date: _____

Revision Date/Time (Note if correction): _____ Dept. Affected: OOG
 Title "An Act relating to municipal RDU Elections
initiative and referendum elections." Component Elections
 Sponsor Senator Gary Stevens
 Requester Senate CRA Component No. 21

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY 2006	FY 2007	FY 2008	FY 2009	FY 2010	FY 2011
Personal Services						
Travel						
Contractual	0.0					
Supplies						
Equipment						
Land & Structures						
Grants & Claims						
Miscellaneous						
TOTAL OPERATING	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

CAPITAL EXPENDITURES						
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CHANGE IN REVENUES ()						
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1002 Federal Receipts						
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1037 GF/Mental Health						
Other (Specify Type-Do not abbreviate)						
TOTAL	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0

Estimate of any current year (FY2005) cost: 0.0
 Mark this box (X) if funding for this bill is included in the Governor's FY 2006 budget proposal:

POSITIONS

Full-time						
Part-time						
Temporary						

ANALYSIS: (Attach a separate page if necessary)

This legislation does not pertain to state conducted elections and therefore does not impose any fiscal impact on the Division of Elections.

Prepared by: Lauri Allred, Administrative Assistant Supervisor Phone 465-5347
 Division: Division of Elections Date/Time 1/18/05 1:21 PM
 Approved by: Laura A. Glaiser, Director Date 1/18/2005
 Agency: Division of Elections



217 Second Street, Suite 200 • Juneau, Alaska 99801
Tel (907) 586-1325 • Fax (907) 463-5480 • www.akml.org

January 12, 2005

Senator Gary Stevens
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Stevens,

Re: Support for SB 14 as introduced concerning local elections:

Under the current statute, a municipality may be forced to hold a Special Election when the matter can be more efficiently and effectively put on a coming Regular Election ballot. Depending on the issue, a municipality may decide to hold a Special Election, or wait until a Regular Election. In some cases, the additional cost and timing of a Special Election may diminish voter turnout or create negative feelings about the issue. These decisions about local elections can only be made at the local level.

The AML Policy Statement adopted in November, 2004 supports SB 14 as introduced. The AML Policy Statement says "The League supports legislation that would increase the authority of local governments to conduct their own elections, including setting the date of elections."

SB 14 as introduced would allow municipalities to save money and more efficiently conduct elections by allowing municipalities to avoid holding unnecessary special elections when it is more appropriate to put the matter on a Regular Election ballot.

Thank you for introducing this important municipal legislation and for your on-going support of strong communities.

Sincerely

Scott Brandt-Erichsen
Alaska Municipal League Legislative Committee
Local Government and Public Services Subcommittee

Support



KENAI PENINSULA BOROUGH

144 N. BINKLEY • SOLDOTNA, ALASKA • 99669-7599
BUSINESS (907) 262-8608 FAX (907) 262-8615
EMAIL: assemblyclerk@borough.kenai.ak.us

LINDA MURPHY, MMC
BOROUGH CLERK

January 11, 2005

The Honorable Gary Stevens
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 417
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 14

Dear Senator Stevens:

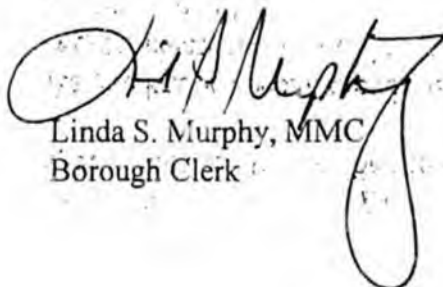
Thank you for sponsoring SB 14 which seeks to eliminate the mandate that a municipality call a special election to consider an initiative or referendum brought forward by the voters.

As you know, special elections are costly and generally result in a lower voter turnout than the regular election. In addition, most measures brought forward using the initiative or referendum process are not so pressing in nature that they could not wait for the regular municipal election. Even so, I am happy to see that there is nothing in your bill that would prohibit the governing body from calling a special election if the Council or Assembly wished to have the matter considered in a more timely manner.

In 2002, the Fairbanks North Star Borough had a total of 46 petitions filed over a period of 4 months. Although these petitions resulted in only one special election (at a cost of \$35,000), there was the potential for many more at great cost to the municipality. As funding for municipalities dwindles, many local governments can no longer afford the luxury of conducting multiple elections.

Thank you once again for your assistance. I would be happy to testify on behalf of the bill at any upcoming committee hearing.

Sincerely,



Linda S. Murphy, MMC
Borough Clerk



**OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK/
ELECTION OFFICIAL**

155 S. Seward St., Room 202
Phone: (907)586-5278 Fax: (907)586-4552
eMail: Laurie_Sica@ci.juneau.ak.us

January 27, 2005

Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska Senate
State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Senate Bill 14

Dear Senator Stevens,

Thank you for the opportunity for a hearing on SB14. I appreciate your interest in this issue.

SB14 will provide local elected officials with an opportunity to debate the merits of placing an initiative or referendum on a special election schedule or adding it to a regularly scheduled election ballot. It will not prevent an initiative or referendum from going to a vote of the people, it will only effect the timing of the vote.

In June 2003, the City and Borough of Juneau held a special election at the call of the Assembly, to bond for additional funds to build a new high school. It was the Assembly's decision that the matter could not wait for the October regular election.

In June 2004, a citizen's initiative was certified to prevent CBJ from proceeding with construction of the new high school until it could be demonstrated that the project could be constructed within the original design specifications and budget proposed in 1999. The Assembly allowed the measure to proceed to a special election, in order to prevent further delay to the school construction schedule.

In both cases, the Assembly determined that the cost of a special election was outweighed by the cost of delay of a decision by the citizens. However, the Assembly did not have a complete choice in the case of the 2004 initiative. The CBJ charter mandates a special election shall be held within 60 days if the Assembly fails to enact a measure substantially similar to an initiated measure or to repeal a referred measure. In the case of an initiated or referred matter that could wait (for example, if citizens requested to repeal the "no-smoking" ordinance, which had a significant public comment period and public debate) SB 14 would provide a City Council or Assembly with the opportunity to place the measure on the next regularly scheduled election, saving public funds in the process.

I encourage you to allow SB 14 to proceed through the legislative process without amendment. I would like to see a similar amendment made to the CBJ home rule charter. A change to the state statutes will facilitate a discussion on this issue at the local level.

Please contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Laurie Sica, CMC
Municipal Clerk/Election Official
City and Borough of Juneau, Alaska



ADOPTED AUGUST 1972
January 27, 2005

CITY of WRANGELL, ALASKA

INCORPORATED JUNE 15, 1903

BOX 531, 99929 (907) 874-2381
FAX: (907) 874-3952

Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Senate
State Capitol, Room 203
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: Senate Bill #14

Dear Senator Stevens:

Thank you for introducing and sponsoring Senator Bill #14. As election supervisor for the City of Wrangell, I support this bill relating to municipal initiative and referendum elections.

As you know, the City of Wrangell is a home-rule municipality and currently practices a similar concept as being proposed through our city charter and city code, however there are other municipalities within the state of Alaska that need this change within our legislature to help alleviate the serious problem of spending thousands of dollars to conduct special elections due to not being able to wait for a regular election. Your bill would help those communities.

Thank you for the opportunity to let me comment on this most important act.

Respectfully yours,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Christie L. Jamieson'.

Christie L. Jamieson, CMC
City Clerk



Fairbanks North Star Borough

Office of the
Borough Clerk

809 Pioneer Road

P.O. Box 71267

Fairbanks, Alaska 99707-1267

907/459-1401

Fax 907/459-1224

Email clerks@co.fairbanks.ak.us

January 14, 2005

The Honor' Gary Stevens
The Honor Representative Paul Seaton

Dear Senator Stevens and Representative Seaton;

Re: SB 14 and HB 50 "An Act relating to municipal initiative and referendum elections";

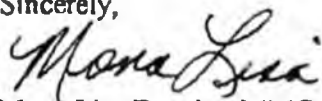
The Fairbanks North Star Borough Assembly and Administration supports SB 14 and HB 50 "An Act relating to municipal initiative and referendum elections." In December the Borough Assembly and Mayor Jim Whitaker met with our Interior Delegation and advocated a change in state law concerning special elections held for initiative or referendum petitions that have been certified.

SB 14/HB 50 is a simple bill that helps address one small area of AS 29 that deals with local municipal special elections. It places any initiative or referendum petition that is successful in being certified to the next regular municipal election.

Conducting a special election at a different time than the regularly scheduled municipal election is expensive, time consuming and very difficult to pull together. Voter turnout is traditionally low. SB 14/HB 50 as introduced allows municipalities to save money and continue to more efficiently conduct elections

Thank you again for introducing this important legislation. If there is any additional information needed from my office, please let me know.

Sincerely,


Mona Lisa Drexler, MMC
Municipal Borough Clerk
Fairbanks North Star Borough

KETCHIKAN GATEWAY BOROUGH

Office of the Borough Manager - 344 Front Street - Ketchikan, Alaska 99901
mgr@borough.ketchikan.ak.us

Roy Eckert
Borough Manager
(907) 228-6625
Fax: (907) 247-662

January 13, 2005

Senator Gary Stevens
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol, Room 103
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Dear Senator Stevens:

The Ketchikan Gateway Borough supports passage of Senate Bill No. 14 which amends the scheduling of initiative and referendum elections. The current law requires a mandatory special election if no election occurs within 75 days after certification of a petition. This creates a financial burden for the Borough because special elections can cost upwards of \$10,000 to hold. The law also does not allow the Borough to schedule an election at a time which would allow for optimum voter turnout.

Senate Bill No. 14, as written, gives the Assembly the ability to determine whether it is in the best interest of the Borough to hold a special election. We have found that people seeking initiatives are usually willing to wait until the general election in October to have their proposition placed on the ballot. In fact, in 2003 a group sponsoring an initiative to begin the process for a charter commission worked extensively with the Borough Clerk to assure that a special election was not necessary.

Let me know what else we can do to assist you in passage of this bill. It benefits the communities of Alaska without hampering the initiative and referendum process.

Sincerely,



Roy Eckert
Borough Manager

c: Borough Mayor and Assembly



**OFFICE OF THE MUNICIPAL CLERK/
ELECTION OFFICIAL**

155 S. Seward St., Room 202
Phone: (907)586-5278 Fax: (907)586-4552
eMail: Laurie_Sica@ci.juneau.ak.us

February 7, 2005

Representative Carl Gatto
Vice-Chair, House State Affairs Committee
Alaska House of Representatives
State Capitol, Room 411
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

Re: House Bill 50

Dear Representative Gatto,

As election official for the City and Borough, I wish to express my support for HB50, "An Act Relating To Municipal Initiative And Referendum Elections." HB50 will provide local elected officials with an opportunity to debate the merits of placing an initiative or referendum on a special election schedule or adding it to a regularly scheduled election ballot. It will not prevent an initiative or referendum from going to a vote of the people, it will only effect the timing of the vote.

In June 2003, the City and Borough of Juneau held a special election at the call of the Assembly, to bond for additional funds to build a new high school. It was the Assembly's decision that the matter could not wait for the October regular election.

In June 2004, a citizen's initiative was certified to prevent CBJ from proceeding with construction of the new high school until it could be demonstrated that the project could be constructed within the original design specifications and budget proposed in 1999. The Assembly allowed the measure to proceed to a special election, in order to prevent further delay to the school construction schedule.

In both cases, the Assembly determined that the cost of a special election was outweighed by the cost of delay of a decision by the citizens. However, the Assembly did not have a complete choice in the case of the 2004 initiative. The CBJ charter mandates a special election shall be held within 60 days if the Assembly fails to enact a measure substantially similar to an initiated measure or to repeal a referred measure. In the case of an initiated or referred matter that could wait (for example, if citizens requested to repeal the "no-smoking" ordinance, which had a significant public comment period and public debate) HB50 would provide a general government City Council or Assembly with the opportunity to place the measure on the next regularly scheduled election, saving public funds in the process.

I encourage you to support and adopt HB50. I would like to see a similar amendment made to the CBJ home rule charter. A change to the state statutes will facilitate a discussion on this issue at the local level.

Please contact me if I can be of any assistance.

Sincerely,

Laurie Sica, CMC
Municipal Clerk/Election Official
City and Borough of Juneau, Alaska

Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

Special elections

Wednesday, January 19, 2005 - Hard to believe it's been just about a year since Fairbanks North Star Borough voters went to the polls in a special election to decide the future of the borough's vehicle I/M program. And if the Legislature agrees, never again will the borough be forced by the law to conduct a midwinter special election and get stuck with the associated costs.

And that would be good.

Senate Bill 14 would change state law governing when most local governments, including the Fairbanks North Star Borough but not the home-rule cities of Fairbanks and North Pole, must conduct special elections on citizen initiatives and referendums. The law, in its present form, states that initiatives and referendums must be decided in a special election from 45 to 75 days after the petitions are certified if no regular election is otherwise scheduled for that period.

That requirement is the reason that the Fairbanks borough found itself having the vehicle emission vote last January and the fuel transfer tax vote in June 2002. The borough's regular election is held each October, but the petitions were certified outside the window that would allow their topics to appear on the regular ballot.

The result? The I/M election itself cost an estimated \$50,000, not including staff time, and drew far fewer voters than would be expected to turn out at a regular election on a nice, or even miserable, early-October day.

Changing state law makes sense

Why should local governments be forced into a special election and the associated costs on matters that can wait until a regular election? They shouldn't, provided that timely regular elections are on the calendar.

And with special elections notoriously having low voter turnout, it seems the public interest is best served if issues can be decided when there is the greatest likelihood of voter participation. In Alaska, that usually means the fall, after the summer's activities have wrapped up and before the snow has come down.

There is an argument to be made, though, that eliminating the requirement for a special election reduces the ability of the people to change their local laws on their terms, when they want to. But Senate Bill 14, and a companion House bill that is undergoing some revision, will allow a community's governing body--for Fairbanks that would be the Borough Assembly--to schedule a special election if that body determines that holding one is in the best interest of the community. It's difficult, though not impossible, to imagine the assembly refusing to order a special election if there's widespread demand for one. The tradeoff in money saved and in avoiding having important matters decided by a small number of people is worth it.

The Legislature took up this issue last year, but the Senate version of the bill became embroiled in the Anchorage mayor's race, of all things, when a legislator added a provision affecting how that race could be decided.

Let's hope the bill stays fairly clean this time around so that the Fairbanks North Star Borough and other communities can reduce the number of special elections.

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Anchorage Daily News

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Kodiak lawmaker resurrects special elections bill

The Associated Press

(Published: January 28, 2005)

FAIRBANKS (AP) - A Kodiak lawmaker has resurrected an effort to allow municipalities to avoid costly special elections.

Senate Majority Leader Gary Stevens introduced the bill prior to the legislative session. The bill would give boroughs and some cities the option of delaying a vote on citizen initiatives or referendums until a regularly scheduled election.

Current law requires a special election be held within 75 days of a petition being certified.

"The intent is simply to allow local municipalities, local communities to avoid very costly elections for referendums or initiatives," Stevens said.

If Stevens' bill passes, municipalities could still hold special elections on time-sensitive issues.

The measure received its first hearing Wednesday in the Senate Community & Regional Affairs Committee. Several municipal clerks testified in favor of the bill, agreeing with Stevens that having the option of delaying a vote on an initiative or referendum would be advantageous.

"A special election is costly, time-consuming, and traditionally the turnout is very low," said Mona Lisa Drexler, clerk for the Fairbanks North Star Borough.

Drexler has estimated in the past that a special election in 2002 on whether to enact a fuel transfer tax cost the borough more than \$60,000. Last year's attempt to eliminate the borough's vehicle inspection and maintenance program cost more than \$50,000.

Both measures were defeated by a wide margin and drew less than 16 percent of registered voters to the polls.

Kenai Peninsula Borough Clerk Linda Murphy said municipalities do not typically set aside money for special elections.

"These are not budgeted items," she said. "So when we do have a special election, we have to go back and get a supplemental appropriation to hold one."

The committee had been set to pass the bill and forward it to the Finance Committee Thursday. However, Sen. Thomas Wagoner, R-Kenai, voiced the idea of requiring a certain level of voter turnout at special elections in order for the results to be certified.

That system, which is used in Washington state, would encourage special elections to be held closer to a regularly scheduled election, when voter turnout is typically higher, he said.

Stevens said the bill is identical to the measure he introduced last session. That bill passed the Senate but did not make it out of the House of Representatives.

The committee is scheduled to take up the bill again Monday.

Information from: Fairbanks Daily News-Miner, <http://www.newsminer.com>

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