15Coastal Kelly

06/15/12

Two former employees of the Alaska Coastal Management Program debated in front of a packed house at the Juneau Chamber of Commerce yesterday (Thursday). At issue – a measure on the August primary ballot that would re-establish the federally funded program, which gives the state oversight of permitting activities along its coastline.

KTOO’s Casey Kelly has more.

15Coastal 3:39

OUT CUE SOC

Former state Commissioner of Environmental Conservation Kurt Fredriksson co-chairs the recently formed “Vote No on 2” campaign. But he made it clear he’s not against the state asserting its influence over coastal development.

15Coastal1 :07s *“Whether it’s called Coastal Management or some other form, clearly I believe Alaska needs a stronger voice in federal decision making.”*

In fact, Fredriksson held up a piece of paper, on which he’d written a wish list of what he’d like to see in a coastal management program. It included many of the same ideas talked about by his debate opponent, Juneau Representative Beth Kerttula.

But Fredriksson said he finds Ballot Measure 2 problematic – namely, the measure would establish a Coastal Policy Board that does not include anyone from the governor’s office, and the board’s other representatives would no longer be elected officials from coastal regions.

15Coastal2 :18s *“In the past I worked on the Alaska Coastal Policy Council. I was a member. I was a staff member to it. I had a lot of experience with the Coastal Policy Board. One of the beauties of that board is it was locally elected officials. Locally elected officials sat on that board and they were accountable to the citizens of their communities.”*

Kerttula – a coastal management attorney before becoming a lawmaker – countered that members of the board would be nominated by elected officials in their communities, and the governor would ultimately make the appointments. Plus, she said policy board would include four commissioners.

15Coastal3 :15s *“How it works is, the commissioners will meet with the governor. They’ll be talking to this governor before they make a decision. So, the governor’s voice will be heard. But it will work in a way that Alaskans can come together for the final resolution on development.”*

Kerttula said that’s the idea Congress had when it passed the Coastal Zone Management Act in 1972. The act allowed states to coordinate federal and local permitting activities for projects along their coastlines. It also provided a funding mechanism for them to do so.

Alaska had a program in place from 1979 until last year. Then Democrats and rural lawmakers sought changes giving local communities a stronger voice. But they ran into opposition from Governor Sean Parnell and some House Republicans. The two sides were unable to reach an agreement on the changes and lawmakers failed to reauthorize the program.

Kerttula said the absence of coastal management has hurt Alaska residents and businesses.

15Coastal4 :20s *“The entire North Slope was developed under Coastal Zone Management. The Kensington Mine, here at home, was developed under Coastal Zone Management.”*

But Fredriksson argued the initiative starts from scratch when it comes to coastal policy. He said that’s counterintuitive to the goal of giving Alaska a stronger voice.

14Coastal1 :09s *“What I do think the initiative will do, because it’s so poorly written as to leave many questions unanswered, is it’s going to lead to delay and potential litigation.”*

In response, Kerttula said the initiative sets up a framework for developing a strong coastal policy.

15Coastal5 :11s “*Coastal Management is a process. It’s a tool. It’s a way to bring people together, to give them a seat at the table, to decide up front how development goes forward.”*

Voters will decide whether Ballot Measure 2 ultimately becomes law. The initiative is on the August 28th primary ballot. Both Kerttula and Fredriksson urged the audience to read the measure and past versions of the Alaska Coastal Management Program before the election. In Juneau, I’m Casey Kelly.