



[Click here to return to the original story](#)

---

## Capital move bill introduced, faces hurdles

Mat-Su representative wants Legislature to look at offers to move

Juneau's legislative delegation expects to again have to fight capital move efforts in the new legislative session, but expects to again be able to stop those efforts.

Rep. Mark Neuman, R-Big Lake, has pre-filed House Bill 48, offering local cities the opportunity to build a new Legislative Hall for the state and win the economic development boost the presence of the Alaska Legislature would provide.

Juneau advocates feared loss of the Legislature would soon mean loss of the rest of state government.

In the last session of the Legislature, a similar bill moved clear through to the finance committee, where it was passed with the support of current Speaker Mike Chenault, R-Nikiski.

Members of the Juneau delegation say they're confident the bill won't pass this session, however.

Democrats were united against it last year, but it was passed through the committee process with Republican backing.

Now, Rep.-elect Cathy Muñoz R-Juneau, said she's been working in the Republican caucus to see that doesn't happen again.

"I have not found there to be a lot of support for it," she said.

Falling oil prices may limit other legislators' interest in spending money on a capital move, said Rep. Beth Kerttula, D-Juneau.

"I think because of the budget issues, it's going to slow down other things," she said.

"I think there's going to be a focus on the state, instead of sheer political moves like moving the capital," Kerttula said.

Muñoz said she's been encouraging members of the Majority caucus "not to pit one region against another" in a quest for economic development.

Muñoz, too, will chair the Community and Regional Affairs Committee, a likely referral of any capital move bill. Committees rarely approve bills to which their chairs are strongly opposed.

In the Senate, Juneau's Kim Elton remains an integral part of the majority caucus and in a strong position to oppose any capital move efforts. Southeast's other two senators, Albert Kookesh, of Angoon, and Bert Stedman, of Sitka, are also members of the Senate Majority.

Even if a Republican-backed capital move bill were to pass the House, Elton said he was confident it could be stopped in the Senate. Senate Democrats this year are even stronger, with 10 of the Senate's 20 members, and they are joined by six Republicans to make up the Bipartisan Working Group Majority organization.

The Senate announced Tuesday that Elton would this session sit on the Legislative Council, a committee that manages the business of the Legislature and a key committee for protecting the capital.

- Contact reporter Pat Forgey at 523-2250 or [patrick.forgey@juneauempire.com](mailto:patrick.forgey@juneauempire.com).

Click here to return to story:

[http://juneauempire.com/stories/011409/loc\\_377249323.shtml](http://juneauempire.com/stories/011409/loc_377249323.shtml)