

# Spend the Permanent Fund? No!

By: Rep. Vic Kohring  
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Rep. Moses' [House Bill 20](#), which would create a "Community Dividend Program" paid for with Permanent Fund earnings, is premature and nothing but a rehash of existing municipal revenue sharing. Far better to start at a deeper level. Do we need to spend any of the Permanent Fund? The answer is no. As Noble Laureate economist Milton Friedman recommended (who was asked to advise the Legislature at the time), the Fund was created as a method to place oil money directly into the hands of people *as individuals*, avoiding politicians tendency for wasteful spending.

If we were to pick away at the Permanent Fund to pay for government, we would be setting the stage for the eventual pillage of the Fund. If we ignore the principle of *why* the fund was made, then we condemn it to oblivion.

My approach is basic. Why are we even debating a raid on the Permanent Fund? Because the Legislature, in its baronial wisdom, has spent more than it took in since at least 1994, the year I was first elected. With oil money dwindling, many, especially bureaucrats and liberal media, clamor for *new* sources to bleed.

This approach is wrong. We don't need *new* sources of public money; we need the courage to do something quite revolutionary. We need to slice off large chunks of the unnecessary and wasteful portions of our multi-billion dollar budget. One thing that can go is Municipal Assistance, which is what HB 20 is intended to replace. We can also consolidate departments and abolish other feel-good social programs created when money gushed forth into legislative coffers from the Slope.

Let's move toward fiscal sanity. It's time we finally reined in the Legislature's spending habits with a firm commitment to operating a lean, limited government instead of the Hydra-headed, multi-billion dollar monstrosity we have now. It has created a generation of Alaskans who think only of how important *their* particular special interest is, and see how much money they can take from Juneau as if it's their right.

We voted a few years ago on whether we should raid the Permanent Fund with a resounding 83% NO! I agree and believe we have definitely *not* exhausted our ability to cut government. The Big Government advocates whine that we "have cut spending to the bone", but in reality, we have spent *hundreds of millions more* since 1994.

It's time to end the official lunacy and restore financial liberty to Alaska. It's long overdue.

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Vic Kohring is a 4th term Republican who represents Wasilla and Peters Creek in the Alaska State Legislature. He is a member of the House Budget Subcommittees on Health & Social Services, Public Safety and Transportation.