



Senate Majority News

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Senate Leadership Responds to State of the State

(Juneau) - Senate Leadership responded to Gov. Frank Murkowski's proposed permanent fund "convention" in Tuesday's State of the State address as a productive way to approach discussions on revising the method for calculating the Alaska Permanent Fund payout.

"The governor has come up with a bold idea to foster discussion on policy regarding the percent of market value," said Senate President Gene Therriault (R-North Pole). "It invites the public to participate and follow the discussions."

The percent of market value plan would base the amount of money available for spending on the fund's total value rather than earnings from its investments. The mechanism would make the dividend more predictable.

"Hopefully we can keep the political rhetoric down so we can have substantive discussions on the issue," Therriault said. "Discussing the merits of the idea doesn't commit anyone's vote to either side of the issue."

"It's an innovative way to jump-start the discussion in the legislature," said Senate Majority Leader Ben Stevens (R-Anchorage).

Both leaders endorsed the governor's emphasis on reduced spending.

"It's clear that the focus of the administration is to hold the line on spending, which is the preference of our majority. Regardless of the outcome of the discussions on POMV, we want to keep spending down and develop our resources," Therriault said, adding that he expects a constitutional spending limit to be an element of the legislature's discussion.

"We look forward to the ideas and contributions from interested individuals," Therriault said.

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