



## Alaska State Legislature

Representative Max Gruenberg  
Senator Kim Elton  
Representative David Guttenberg

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### ***DEMOCRATS: "MURKOWSKI SHOULD GROUND JET"***

Gruenberg, Elton and Guttenberg call on governor to add jet travel to his cost-saving measures

ANCHORAGE - Rep. Max F. Gruenberg, Jr. (D-Anchorage), Sen. Kim Elton (D-Juneau) and Rep. David Guttenberg (D-Fairbanks) have asked Gov. Frank Murkowski to eliminate non-essential use of the state jet until oil flow through the Trans-Alaska Pipeline returns to normal levels.

In a letter to the governor, Gruenberg mentioned the governor's state hiring freeze in response to BP's partial shutdown of operations at Prudhoe Bay. During his recent address to a joint session of the Legislature, Murkowski said the freeze was part of an effort to reduce non-essential government spending.

"The Governor's use of the jet is another non-essential state expense that should also be suspended," Gruenberg said. The jet could still be used for prisoner transport, Gruenberg said, but he believes the governor should use less expensive travel alternatives as part of the Administration's cost saving measures.

Sen. Elton has pressed the governor to use more economical forms of transportation since the jet was purchased, and also to eliminate frivolous personal use of the state jet. The letter to Murkowski cites three specific examples when use of commercial flights would have saved the state thousands of dollars.

"A hiring freeze will impact Alaskans who need a new driver's license, a clean water permit, or help from a Trooper. The inconvenience of flying commercial is the least the governor can do," said Elton.

"If he won't sell the jet, at least he should stop using it until the state resumes its normal level of services to other Alaskans," Rep. Guttenberg said.

**NOTE: A copy of the letter is displayed below for your information.**

Rep. Gruenberg can be reached at (907) 269-0123; Rep. Guttenberg at (907) 456-8172; and Sen. Elton at (907) 465-4947.

August 16, 2006

Governor Frank Murkowski  
State Capitol  
Mail Stop 00001  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

RE: State Hiring Freeze

Dear Governor Murkowski:

During your address to the joint session last week, you stated that, as part of an effort to cut down non-essential state expenditures pending resumption of full oil production through the Trans Alaska Pipeline, you had instituted an immediate hiring freeze. As long as you're considering reducing non-essential expenditures, we would request that you eliminate all non-prisoner use of the state jet, except for extraordinary circumstances.

We note several past instances where you and the first lady, sometimes with members of your staff, flew via the state jet when commercial flights - even first-class tickets purchased without advance notice - would have been significantly less expensive for the state. By way of example, these included flying three passengers from Anchorage to Juneau on March 6 at a cost of more than \$925 each, flying two passengers from Fairbanks to Anchorage on April 6 at a cost of almost \$500 each, and your November 27 roundtrip from Dallas to Las Vegas and back in order to carry three passengers from Las Vegas to Dallas at a cost of more than \$3000 each. The total for these trips above cost the state about \$10,000.

A hiring freeze impacts services to Alaskans. Grounding the jet as we request is one efficiency the executive branch of state government can realize in turn.

Thank you very much.

Cordially,




Kim Elton  
State Senator



David Guttenberg  
State Representative

Max F. Gruenberg, Jr.  
State Representative

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