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## Fairbanks lawmaker questions Alyeska employee transfer

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JUNEAU — Rep. David Guttenberg, D-Fairbanks, has requested a public hearing on Alyeska Pipeline Service Co.'s plans to transfer employees from Fairbanks to Anchorage.

The pipeline operator, jointly owned by major North Slope energy companies, said late last year it would consolidate office space in Fairbanks and Valdez and shift many of its desk

jobs to Anchorage, part of a larger cost-cutting plan.

Guttenberg told other state lawmakers Thursday the company's plans seem unjustified and "bizarre."

He asked for a public hearing by the House Resources Committee.

Guttenberg said the actions indicate the company "seems to have no regard for pipeline safety or integrity," which he said makes the company's moves of federal interest as well.

"From what I understand, there has been internal dissent on the move, but it keeps getting overridden at the highest level," Guttenberg wrote in an e-mail Thursday morning to a handful of Interior lawmakers and their aides. He stated he's heard dozens of employees could be transferred.

Guttenberg said he has spoken to the staff of a United States congressman about the prospect of a congressional hearing on pipeline safety.

"Over the years that I worked (the) pipeline, I found that Alyeska personnel cared a great deal about their work and were always concerned about safety and integrity issues," he said. "The increased risk for spills and response times by itself should affect the decision making, but other issues appear to be more important at this time."

Alyeska said declining throughput on the 800-mile pipeline has contributed to rising marginal costs. Alyeska spokeswoman Michelle Egan said the company has been upfront with its plans and expects to save \$3 million by trimming real estate in Fairbanks and Valdez.

Egan responded to Guttenberg's comments on safety by noting 2008 was Alyeska's safest year, earning it a distinguished safety award from the American Petroleum Institute. The following year proved even safer, she said.

"We're not going to make decisions that compromise that," Egan said.

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