

Compromise bill paves way for vote on capital move

JUNEAU (AP) — Few people thought it could be done. But after months of bickering, leaders on both sides of the divisive capital move issue endorsed a compromise bill last week that paves the way for Alaskans to vote again in 1982 on relocation costs.

During testimony before the Senate State Affairs Committee, lawmakers and spokesmen for both pro and anti-move groups urged passage of the measure.

"This is a day to be remembered," said Sen. Brad Bradley, R-Anchorage. His comment came after Frank Harris, who has fought for years to move the capital as chairman of the Anchorage-based Capital Relocation Committee, and Jim Clark of Juneau, chairman of the anti-move Alaska Committee, publicly endorsed the bill.

Gov. Jay Hammond said the legislation also has his blessing.

Barring an unexpected

roadblock, the bill appears headed for legislative approval this session. The State Affairs Committee, headed by Sen. Vic Fischer, D-Anchorage, passed the bill Tuesday, and a Senate vote is expected this week.

The bill (CSSB586) would amend the FRANK initiative to require a vote on the total cost to the state of building a "functional state capital" at Willow.

The bill specifies the 1982 ballot would include the total

cost of the move, and also would include information on: the amount of money likely to be defrayed by the net proceeds from land disposals at the Willow site; the cost of new facilities in Juneau and elsewhere if the capital is not moved; the number of state workers to be moved from Juneau and Anchorage; the estimated population of Willow when relocation is complete; and the cost of capital improvements, relocation of state workers and equipment and indemnification costs.

The bill calls for the Capital Site Planning Commission to be rejuvenated, with vacancies on the nine-member panel filled by Hammond. The commission would be required to figure the new cost estimate for moving the capital, complete a development plan, and decide the earliest practical date for relocation to be completed.

Pro-movers won two key victories. The bill eliminates the current requirement that the commission figure costs for a city of at least 30,000 people. The bill also allows the

commission to select a likely relocation date.

The old planning commission, which figured relocation costs through 1994, put a \$996 million bond issue on the ballot, and it was rejected by voters in 1978.

The new commission would be required to use the "substantial evidence rule" to update existing criteria for relocation costs, and to use the average rate of growth and rate of inflation for construction costs for the preceding 10 years.

To satisfy Hammond's concern that the issue be laid to rest as much as possible, the bill specifies that if voters reject the new cost estimate, all previous capital move initiatives will be repealed, and also the indemnification law put on the books to cushion the impact relocation would have on Juneau property owners.

The bill, which is a revised version of a measure introduced by Hammond after he vetoed an earlier bill, was drafted with help from several lawmakers.