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## A curious cut

### Legislators should consider undoing energy center veto

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Sarah Palin has, whether she intended to or not, sent an unfortunate message with her veto of \$1.5 million in state and federal funding for an energy research center at the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

The message is that looking for new and different energy sources isn't a high priority.

It needs to be.

Energy prices are high on the list of Alaskan concerns right now, and state officials should be doing all they can to assist in the search for cheaper sources of power. Urban areas such as Fairbanks need state officials to think that way now; rural areas, where the price of energy is sky high, needed them to think that way yesterday.

It's called foresight.

Gov. Palin's veto of the state and federal funds from the coming year's budget has put the research center in a bind. The center's director says the money would have been used to further work into geothermal energy and to study other potential sources, such as river current, the tides, and a wind/diesel combination.

The governor, says her budget director, cut the money because she is concerned about the size of the state budget. But the amount of state money in question here is tiny when compared to the ghastly sum of cash the state is taking in from the traditional source of energy — the oil industry.

There seems to be some incongruity in the messages the governor is sending on the energy front. Her recent decision to put forward a plan to help Alaskans pay their energy bills by providing \$100 in aid to each recipient of a permanent fund dividend shows some valid near-term concern. But her veto of the energy research center funds shows, curiously, less concern for the long term.

Alaska needs its leaders to be thinking not only about today but also about tomorrow. That sort of thinking also happens to be a mark of good leadership.

Legislators will have an opportunity to override the governor's veto of the energy funds when they head into special session in June. Let's hope that the high prices that have been damaging personal and business finances cause them to restore the money to the energy research program at UAF.