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**Binkley Says Murkowski Giveaways in
State Capital Budget Are Irresponsible**

Republican gubernatorial candidate John Binkley said today the \$2.4 billion capital budget signed by Frank Murkowski today is a perfect illustration of the current administration's irresponsible spending.

"It is a sad day for Alaskans when Murkowski, who calls himself a fiscal conservative, signs a bloated capital budget," Binkley said. "At a time when Alaskans are paying more at the gas pump and more to heat their homes, their governor is spending money like there's no tomorrow."

Murkowski signed the largest state capital budget in Alaska's history clad in a Santa Claus hat, indicating he was giving away the state's money to anyone and everyone.

"Signing this budget is particularly shameful in light of the fact that two years ago this governor tried to raid the Permanent Fund and impose a statewide sales tax to pay for state spending," Binkley said.

"Alaska grants its governor a tremendous amount of authority when it comes to the responsibility to control state spending. It's up to a governor to set the right tone by running a tight ship and not allow spending beyond our means," Binkley said. "This governor has ducked the difficult decisions a governor must make in order to responsibly manage the state budget."

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Binkley, who has owned and operated a successful business, said his experience meeting a payroll and making tough calls to maintain a thriving business and his service as co-chair of the Senate Finance Committee, helped underscore the importance of true fiscal conservatism in the governor's office.

“Alaskans want a governor who can make tough decisions, especially when it comes to controlling the State's purse strings,” Binkley said. “This bloated budget shows Alaskans that Murkowski made either no decision at all, or he made the the wrong ones.”

Binkley criticized Murkowski's veto of assistance to utilities – something Binkley said would result in higher energy costs for Alaskans.

“What ever happened to the concept of saving for a rainy day? Two years ago the Governor told us we were in a budget crisis as he killed the Longevity Bonus and presented plans to tax Alaskans while also raiding the Permanent Fund. Today he stands before us in a Santa Claus hat telling us we should be happy he's signing the largest capital budget we've ever seen,” Binkley said. “Just like Santa Claus, I think Murkowski is living in a fantasy world. Meanwhile Alaskans have ended up with a lump of coal.”

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