

State plans to release Palin emails in Juneau on Friday

LONG-DELAYED: Sen. Dennis Egan is pushing state to ship public review copies to Anchorage, Fairbanks too.

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The state on Monday announced the time and place for release of 24,199 pages of Sarah Palin's emails as Friday morning in Juneau.

The long-delayed release will be available to media organizations and others paying for paper copies. But Juneau Sen. Dennis Egan is pushing for the state to also ship public review copies to Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Egan, a Democrat, said he was upset that the state won't make the Palin emails available in electronic form. The state printed all the emails out for lawyers to black out portions considered privileged, saying it doesn't have software to do that on their computers.

But Egan argued the state could still then scan those paper copies back into electronic form so anyone can easily access them.

"The thing that really concerns me is that in this age of electronics and digital media, we're doing all this stuff on paper ... it doesn't make any sense to me we're shipping paper all over the state," Egan said.

Egan wrote Parnell Chief of Staff Mike Nizich on Monday saying the paper copies should at least be made available outside of Juneau.

"I don't understand why these electronic records are being put out on paper, but if that's how it has to be, moving paper is easy. I appreciate that the governor's office will have a public review copy here in the Capitol. I'm requesting that you print and deliver the same material to the Anchorage and Fairbanks offices of the governor for public review," Egan wrote.

Anchorage activist Andree McLeod, who was among those who filed public records request for the Palin emails, had protested that she was being required to either fly to Juneau to review them or pay hundreds of dollars for the state to ship her six boxes to Anchorage. That comes on top of the \$725.97 in copying fees the state is charging those who want the emails.

Egan, who has a particular interest in making public records available statewide as a proponent of keeping the Capitol in Juneau, said he'd pay out of his own legislative office account to have the Palin emails shipped to Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Parnell spokeswoman Sharon Leighow said in response that copies would likely be sent next week to the legislative offices of Egan and Anchorage Democratic Reps. Mike Doogan and Berta Gardner, who had requested a set of them. But she said they will not be made publicly available in the governor's offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

Asked about Egan's statement that the state should just scan the paper copies back into electronic form and make them available that way, Leighow said in an email that "the governor's office doesn't have the software to provide that service."

MSNBC.com, meanwhile, plans to work with a document company in the Lower 48 to put all of the emails online itself. "Soon after the emails are released, msnbc.com plans to scan them in and put them online in a public archive, restoring the electronic records to electronic form. This archive will be co-sponsored by Mother Jones magazine, which also requested the documents back in 2008, and with Pro Publica, the nonprofit investigative newsroom, just as msnbc.com did with a batch of Todd Palin emails last year," Bill Dedman of msnbc.com wrote in a story that was published Monday.

MSNBC.com and 16 other news organizations and individuals who filed public records request for the emails can pick them up in Juneau on Friday at 9 a.m. after agreeing to pay the copying fees. Or they can pay the cost to have the state ship them out. That group of requestors includes the Daily News, Associated Press, New York Times, Washington Post and CNN. The process of copying the emails at a commercial printer started last Friday and was supposed to take four days. But it's taking longer because the number of news organizations and individuals requesting them grew over the past week after news coverage of their upcoming release.

The emails cover most of Palin's time as Alaska governor, from when she took office at the beginning of 2007 through Sept. 30, 2008, shortly after John McCain selected her to be his running mate.

Palin resigned from the governor's office on July 26, 2009.

Palin said on Fox News Sunday that she's not worried about the release of the emails. She said "every rock" that could have been kicked over to uncover things about her has been.

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