

Renkes, who said he'd sell KFx stock, may not have yet

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A day after Alaska Attorney General Gregg Renkes pledged to sell his stock in KFx Inc. and donate any profits to charity, it was unclear whether he or his broker had actually made the trade.

"We don't know," said Becky Hultberg, a spokeswoman for Gov. Frank Murkowski, on Tuesday afternoon.

Hultberg referred questions to the attorney general, who is under investigation by a special counsel looking into his stock trades and relationship with KFx, a Colorado firm seeking to process coal from the Beluga fields west of Anchorage. Both Renkes and Gov. Frank Murkowski have promoted KFx in public announcements and in a recent trade agreement with Taiwan, the potential coal buyer.

Neither Renkes nor his spokesman, Mark Morones, would confirm that the stock sale had taken place. Renkes' financial consultant who handles his investments, Dale Anderson, did not return phone messages Monday or Tuesday.

Renkes' announcement that he would sell his stock followed reports that he was tied to KFx as a stockholder and former consultant. Renkes said he disclosed the relationship in public filings with the state and does not believe he violated state ethics laws.

One of the regular disclosure statements he makes goes to the Alaska Permanent Fund Corp., which runs the state's \$28 billion oil-wealth savings account. Because Renkes is a trustee of the fund, he must disclose all his investments. His October 2003 report, signed by Renkes, shows that he bought 12,000 shares of KFx. But last week, both Renkes and Anderson said that report is erroneous.

He did not buy 12,000 shares that month, Renkes said. Rather, he has held those shares for a long time in his retirement account, not the active portfolio that Anderson manages daily. Neither Renkes nor Anderson could explain why the 12,000 shares appeared as a "buy" on Oct. 23, 2003.

As of Tuesday afternoon, Renkes had not filed a corrected version of the report, according to Bob Bartholomew, the Permanent Fund's chief operating officer. Normally, when fund staffers catch an error in a report, they ask the filer for an explanation, he said. Bartholomew said he plans to do so with Renkes.

Meanwhile, as former U.S. Attorney in Alaska Robert Bundy investigates Renkes' ties with KFx and role as state attorney general, some state officials close to the matter have been silent.

State trade director Margy Johnson said that she would no longer talk about the Taiwan trade deal, KFx or Renkes and that files related to the matter were also off limits. Her trade assistant, Patricia Eckert, who focuses on Taiwan issues, said she could not speak about the matter either. Johnson cited Bundy's investigation and said she was following the instructions of her boss, Jim Clark, Murkowski's chief of staff, not to comment.

But Bundy said he didn't see why his inquiry would preclude any state official from granting media interviews or making documents available.

"I'm not aware of any restrictions that the investigation would cause," Bundy said.