

City Duma Rejects Navalny's Bid to Reform Utilities Sector

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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The Moscow City Duma on Wednesday refused to register opposition leader Alexei Navalny's bid to submit a bill on utilities prices, but a communist deputy went against the majority by promising to submit it himself.

Navalny has started a campaign, called the People's Deputy, to collect signatures for several bills, taking advantage of a Moscow law that gives groups of citizens the right to initiate legislation. But so far, not a single bill initiated directly by citizens has been considered by the legislature since the law took effect in the early 2000s.

The Communist Party voted for the bill's registration, while United Russia, which has 91 percent of the City Duma's seats, voted against it.

Vladimir Platonov of United Russia, chairman of the legislature, said he believed that the bill contradicted federal law. But Andrei Klychkov of the Communist Party, a deputy of the City

Duma, said he would sponsor Navalny's bill himself.

Navalny said that United Russia was afraid of the scale of the People's Deputy's activities and its plans to spread his message among the population.

"Why did United Russia take this very destructive stance?" Navalny wrote on his LiveJournal Blog. "They hate the People's Deputy and are afraid of it, pure and simple. The Moscow City Duma wants to live in a calm and cozy world where they're doing nothing for years and receive huge salaries, dachas and apartments for doing nothing."

The opposition leader said he would kick-start a massive campaign to spread information about the rejection of the bill.

The utilities legislation initiated by Navalny calls for mandatory audits of utilities prices, which are regulated by the government, by independent companies in an attempt to cut unjustified costs.

Navalny organized a group of citizens for the bill in early October. Under city law, a group of citizens that has been registered by the City Duma and has collected 50,000 signatures for a bill has the right of legislative initiative.

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