

Putin Approves Plan to Move Courts to St. Pete

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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President Vladimir Putin has given his approval to plans for the relocation of the Supreme Court, the Supreme Arbitration Court and the Supreme Court's judicial department from Moscow to St. Petersburg, though he stressed that no final decision had been made.

The proposed relocation is part of a wider plan to expand the courts, something that Putin said would be better off taking place in St. Petersburg, rather than Moscow.

Vladimir Kozhin, head of the Office of Presidential Affairs, estimated the cost of the move at 50 billion rubles (\$1.5 billion) in comments carried by Interfax on Wednesday.

Kozhin said the process could take between 2 and 2 1/2 years. He emphasized that part of the cost would be recouped from assets currently owned by the courts in central Moscow.

Putin pointed to the successful relocation of the Constitutional Court to St. Petersburg in 2008

in comments about the proposed move, adding that a similar relocation by other federal courts would be beneficial to the city.

Itar-Tass reported that the new site for the courts would be a former naval museum on the northern capital's Vasilevsky Island.

Vyacheslav Makarov, spokesman for St. Petersburg's Legal Council, told the news agency that he wholeheartedly endorsed the move, saying it would "raise the profile of the city."

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