

Russian Region Slashes Local Government to 7 People to Cut Costs

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The Zabaikalsky region in Russia's Far East is set to slash costs by reducing its government to just seven people as part of a new bill, [the TASS news agency](#) reported Monday.

Officials believe that cutting staff numbers down from 18 people will help the province to save some 10 million rubles (\$159,000) a year.

The regional government will be reduced to the governor and six deputy ministers, the region's press service said.

Other ministers will no longer be counted as government members, but will move to head local executive authorities. Two additional positions may also be created to provide extra advisors for the current governor, TASS reported.

The move will let local authorities make decisions without officially meeting, and allow the governor to appoint and dismiss deputy ministers without prior approval, TASS reported.

A vote on the bill is expected to be held on Oct. 19.

Natalya Zhdanova became Siberia's first female governor when she became head of the Zabaikalsky region in September 2016. She won more than 54 percent of the vote for the ruling United Russia party, TASS reported.

The Zabaikalsky region in Russia's Far East covers some 432,000 square kilometers close to the Chinese border. As of 2016, it was home to just over 1 million people.

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