

Submerged lands law extended

The U.S. Senate has agreed to extend the statute of limitations on submerged lands for two years, in order to avoid needless lawsuits between the State of Alaska and Alaska Native corporations.

"When the six-year statute of limitations expires in December 1986, the State of Alaska will be required to file lawsuits against Native corporations under the submerged lands provisions of the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act," said Sen. Frank Murkowski.

"This provision of ANILCA determines the navigability of Alaska's rivers, lakes and streams," he said.

"This extension will give more time for Congress to consider, and act on, a long-term solution to the submerged lands problem and prevent needless litigation."

Murkowski-sponsored legislation to correct the problem was approved recently by the full Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, of which Murkowski is a member.

"However, once again my friend from Ohio, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, acting on behalf of the national environmental lobby, was able to put a hold on this legislation," Murkwoski said.

"So we asked for, and received, this extension of the deadline. The extension in no way replaces action on my comprehensive legislation. I plan to reintroduce a comprehensive bill as soon as Congress reconvenes in January, and I will work hard for its passage.

Under Murkowski's legislation, the statute of limitations would be repealed. His bill would also instruct the Bureau of Land Management to use the same survey and conveyance guidelines in Alaska that are currently being used in other states.