

# letters

## *Governor Hammond says whale hunting should continue*

State of Alaska  
Office of the Governor  
Juneau, Alaska  
July 18, 1977

The Honorable Juanita Kreps  
Secretary of Commerce  
Commerce Building  
14th Street  
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Madam Secretary:

The recent resolution to prohibit all taking of bowhead whales by the International Whaling Commission may impose a needless hardship upon the economic and cultural systems of certain Alaskan citizens residing along the northwest and north coast of the state. I urge you to protest the I.W.C. resolution on bowhead whales as provided for in the convention.

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## **Interior fuel supply may be critical**

Jerry R. Austin  
Agent, Chevron U.S.A.  
St. Michael, AK 99659

Governor Jay Hammond  
Juneau, Alaska  
July 20, 1977

Dear Governor Hammond:

Every year in the lower Yukon River villages there is a shortage of fuel, especially in the late Winter and Spring. Both gasoline and heating fuel usually run out in April in almost every village. This problem is partially due to the fact that the retailers have in most cases failed to add storage to keep up with rising demands.

We are faced this summer with a new problem: many of the village stores have been purchased in the past few years by the Native Corporations in the area, and they are having a difficult time getting the money together to order the fuel. In some cases the problem has been with the individual corporations, but in many cases it has been at the regional level of Calista and Bering Straits where village money has not been made available that normally would have.

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# letters, continued . . .

## Whale hunting . . .

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Eskimos residing along Alaska's coast have taken bowhead whales for centuries. These magnificent mammals provide large quantities of much needed protein for a self sufficient people who have adapted to life in a harsh environment. The whale symbolizes and helps sustain this way of life. A complete closure would unnecessarily hasten the disintegration of a culture already embattled with western technology. Ironically, the rapid changes in part are being brought about because of the United States profligate use of nonrenewable resources, principally, fossil fuels. This has made it necessary to mobilize Alaska's arctic resources with consequent impact upon rural communities by substituting a cash economy for what was a few years ago, an economy based upon sharing, barter and individual harvest of renewable resources.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Marine Mammal Biologists, perhaps the most knowledgeable of all biologists about the arctic marine ecosystem have informed me that there is no compelling evidence that the modest use of bowhead whales by Alaskans is having a detrimental effect upon the resource. To the contrary, they suggest there are a number of indices which support the proposition

that the whale population is considerably larger than estimated by the Marine Mammal Commission or the I.W.C. and further that the population is increasing.

I support and urge the institution of a comprehensive management and research effort by the National Marine Fisheries Service so that an adequate data base can be assembled to hasten full restoration of this important species. In addition, I also support interim management regulations. Such regulations should address geographic quotas, humane methods and means of take, wasteful take, participation in whaling (limited entry), required equipment and seasons. The State of Alaska possesses considerable expertise in regulating marine mammals in the high arctic and we are willing to work with the National Marine Fisheries Service toward an equitable solution of this problem.

Once again, I am disappointed that the federal government has participated in a proceeding that may impact only citizens of this state without prior notice of intentions and trust that in the future we will be informed of such impending matters. We may well be of assistance in avoiding needless strife and difficulties.

Finally in closing I urge that you protest the I.W.C. resolution and that it not be invoked. Instead let's work together to establish a management regime as called for in the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and in the Endangered and Threatened Species Act of 1973.

Sincerely,  
Jay S. Hammond

Governor

## Interior fuel . . .

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The result of this has created a problem we have never experienced before in this area: The carrier, Black Navigation Co. Inc., has delivered virtually every order that I have given them, and there is nothing left to deliver until the corporations get some money to finance their fuel purchases. As a result of this Black Navigation has understandably shifted some of its equipment to the Nenana area operation. While they have left adequate tugs and barges to handle normal incoming orders, both they and I are concerned that the corporations, if they do not get funding, will be so late in their ordering that it will be very difficult if not impossible to handle the rush in the fall (August-September) due to normal bad weather and poor tides.

At present there is approximately 1,500,000 gallons in outstanding orders that usually come in but not this summer. Any effort you and your staff can make to alleviate this problem will be greatly appreciated by everyone operating and living in this area. The time to cure the annual spring fuel shortage is now, rather than flying it in next year at a much greater cost to everyone.

Very truly yours,  
Jerry Austin