

# LETTERS

ALASKA STATE SENATE

March 5, 1972

Senator Ernest F. Hollings  
Chairman, Subcommittee on  
Oceans and Atmospheres  
United States Senate  
Washington, D. C. 20510

Dear Senator Hollings:

I understand there are several bills pending before your Subcommittee which would prohibit the hunting of sea mammals, except under very limited circumstances for subsistence purposes, using ancient methods of hunting and that the products from the sea mammals could not be utilized either indirectly or directly in commercial sale.

I believe that the bills as written would create a severe hardship to the people whom I represent as they live along the Arctic Coast — from Barter Island to St. Lawrence Island. The sea mammals such as walrus, seal, bearded seal, beluga whale, polar bear and the whale have been hunted for thousands of years by the Eskimo people and today consist of the major portion of the diet of the Native people living along the coast where most of the Eskimo people are located. The skins of the animals have been utilized for making mukluks (boots), parkas, mittens for personal use and sometimes for sale to supplement the meager income that we now have.

(Continued on Page 4)

# LETTERS...

(Continued from page 2)

We utilize the meat for home consumption and some of it is for sale to other villages. We utilize seal and whale oil very extensively and is a major part of our diet.

We sincerely request an additional hearing before your Subcommittee to allow village people who utilize these animals to state their reasons for objecting to the present bills that are pending. I am sure that you would not want to create a severe hardship for these people for whom hunting and fishing is a way of life.

I feel that the Eskimo people should not suffer hardship because economic interests were left unbridled in the past and were allowed to decimate sea mammals without regard for the future. The Native people of Alaska have utilized these mammals for subsistence purposes for generations and passage of the bills would be a severe blow to our culture and economy.

I would appreciate knowing the time of your next hearing on this measure which would adversely affect the people I represent.

Sincerely,

William L. Hensley