

Barrow waits for court decision

Excitement is building for some Barrow residents as the time nears for the Alaska Supreme Court to decide whether or not to hear the state's appeal of a judge's order halting Beaufort Sea Oil and Gas Development in Barrow.

Holding the hearings in Barrow where the city's population there and in those living in the outlying villages would be affected, directly by the Judge's decision would be a gesture of good will and faith from the state, bringing the law where it's effects would be felt directly.

There is a genuine possibility that the state's highest court could meet in the northernmost community in North America, Court Administrator Arthur Snowden said in response to an

invitation from several village governments on the North Slope to hear the state's arguments in the state's appeal.

State Officials are appealing Fairbanks Superior Court Judge Jay Hodges ruling which bars drilling north of the Barrier Islands. In his ruling, Hodges said that the state had not adequately assessed the impact of drilling when it offered offshore leases for sale in December 1979.

The five judges in Alaska's Supreme Court must decide whether to meet in Barrow, according to Snowden. But that will have to wait until newly appointed fifth justice, Allen Compton of Juneau officially joins the court in mid-January.

