

# Jamie Love tackles Native corporation

From our Anchorage Bureau

The Alaska Public Interest Research Group has asked the

U. S. Attorney for Alaska to investigate political contributions made by a company owned by the Bering Straits Native Corporation.

In a December 15th letter to U. S. Attorney G. Kent Edwards, the group's director, James Love, said Anchorage Trailer Sales owned by Bering Straits, reported \$5,550 in contributions to candidates for state and local office in the

last election. He added that one candidate reported a direct contribution from Bering Straits.

Love said it appears the contributions may violate Section 6(b) of the land claims act which prohibits money from the Alaska Native Fund being used for political campaigns.

Love told the Tundra Times he spoke with several attorneys,

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# Jamie Love ...

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as well as Bering Straits officials before requesting the investigation. He acknowledged "It's going to be a very complicated legal issue."

Love said his group had discovered the Anchorage Trailer Sales contributions during a review of all contributions made during the last election. "We want to know whether they can make or can't make contributions," he said.

Bering Straits officials could not be located for comment.

U.S. Attorney Edwards said he felt it was best not to comment and would not say directly whether he had yet received Love's letter. He was aware of the law pertaining to political contributions.

Edwards said the Federal Bureau of Investigation, rather than the Interior Department, would probably be responsible for conducting such an investigation. He added that simply because something comes to the attention of his office, does not mean a crime has been committed.

In a press release announcing the request for an investigation, the Alaska Public Interest Research Group said Anchorage Trailer Sales and two other mobile home companies were sued in October by the State of Alaska for anti-competitive sales. That case is still pending. The group noted that Anchorage Trailer Sales paid Sam Kito \$4,500 to lobby against legislation that was unfavorable to the mobile home business.

The law, if passed, would have prevented the practice of tying the rental of space in a mobile home court to the purchase of a new mobile home from a specific dealer. The group contends that Kito also tried to stop an investigation by the Attorney General into mobile home practices.

Kito said he was paid to lobby by the legislation, but denied he tried to stop the investigation. "No, they're wrong. I was involved to try to resolve the situation," Kito said.

Love acknowledged that Kito had done nothing illegal, but said his group was concerned that Native corporations may be using their political clout to protect their investments. In his opinion, he said it was improper for the president of the Alaska Federation of Natives to be involved in the mobile home issue.

"A whole bunch of legislators told me they'd vote whichever way Sam Kito told them to," Love said.

The Alaska Public Interest Research Group was founded in 1974. It is a non-profit organization.