

Nominations of Native Lands Must

The Native Land Claims Bill, if passed, will require that native groups nominate and set aside lands which they want, so that the Secretary of the Interior can remove these lands from the federal "land freeze."

The bill states that "The natives of Alaska are hereby granted the right to a royalty and share of five per cent of the proceeds....only if within six months after the effective date of this chapter the present land freeze imposed by the United States Department of the Interior is unconditionally lifted."

Don Wright, President of the Cook Inlet Native Association, urged all villages to nominate their land claims right now, since the land freeze must be lifted by October 10, 1968.

"This poses a practical problem, since the villages must let the Secretary of the Interior know which key lands they wish, so that he can set them aside," Wright said.

"This nomination of lands can only be done if the state is willing to help the villages with this process,"

he said.

"If the bill passes, the villages must be prepared to make immediate nominations for the land they want, based upon the formula set up for this withdrawal. The formula multiplies the number of the people in the village by 500 to obtain the number of acres to set aside for the village," Wright said.

"This land must be within the area that the villagers use and occupy, and must be in parcels of at least 9 square miles," he said.

Don Wright suggests that if anyone will not be in the village this summer, they should immediately call council meetings and authorize the chief or a representative to act in their behalf at the appropriate time.

"If any village has any objections, they should contact the Alaska Federation of Natives immediately and express them," he said.

"The key to the bill, if it passes, is the rapid processing of nominations of land for the villages for this temporary withdrawal," he said.