

Bill calls for study of villages left out of settlement act

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Five Southeast Alaska communities left out of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act will have their claims to Alaska lands investigated by the federal government if legislation debated recently in the Senate Energy Committee becomes law.

Sen. Frank Murkowski, R-Alaska, is the sponsor of the legislation which directs the secretary of Interior to conduct a study of the aboriginal claims of the Native residents of Haines, Ketchikan, Tenakee, Petersburg and Wrangell and determine whether these claims received equitable treatment under ANCSA.

"Why these villages were excluded from ANCSA Native corporation status is not certain," said Murkowski.

"I expect that the study will show that the exclusion of these villages was inadvertent and was not based on any distinction between these five and other villages that were afforded ANCSA status."