

Re D-2 Lands—

Permanent Body Asked

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A permanent planning body similar to the present Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission should be a "key element" in the legislation dealing with the D-2 lands, said Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska.

Gravel today again urged extension of the present joint commission until December 1978 to coincide with the deadline established in the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act for treatment by Congress of the D-2 lands question.

He said the value of continuing commission activities in "not arguable" among major groups interested in the commission's activities.

Beyond that date, Gravel said in testimony submitted to the Senate Interior Committee, "I would suggest the need for the presence in Alaska of a body similar in character to the present planning commission, but with somewhat differing responsibilities."

The committee conducted a hearing on a number of bills related to the settlement act.

The Alaska democrat also called for reopening the settlement act

roll for one year for enrollment of an estimated 2,000 Natives who were not enrolled prior to the March 1973 deadline.

While individuals added to regional corporation rolls would be entitled to the same stock distribution rights as those presently enrolled, Gravel said the new legislation "would not change the land selection rights of the various corporations or the eligibility status of villages or land selection eligibility of Native groups."

The Alaska democrat also strongly endorsed legislation to clarify the original intent of Congress that the settlement act was not a substitute for "government programs and services Alaska Natives are entitled to as U.S. and Alaska citizens."

"I cannot emphasize too strongly the importance of this language so as to make it absolutely clear to all branches and all levels of government" of our "precise intention," he said. Gravel supported another bill which would allow regional and village corporations not economically viable to merge.

(Continued on Page 6)

D-2 Lands..

(Continued from Page 1)

Gravel also called for an extension of the period by which Native regional corporations must assess their assets. The deadline now is December of 1976.

However, Gravel said, "It has been suggested that due to the full realization of the time it will take for conveyance, it may be completely appropriate to extend this period for several more years."

The Alaska lawmaker endorsed an amendment to the act to provide for payments from the Alaska Native Fund to four "urban" corporations — Juneau, Sitka, Kenai and Kodiak — for planning and development of their lands until their full economic potential can be realized.