

Immediate Moratorium on Polar Bear-

Senator Mike Gravel Alarmed Over Chance of Harming Alaskans

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Mike Gravel warned that a bill pending in the Congress to impose an immediate moratorium on the killing of polar bears may come to the attention of the entire Senate in the near future.

The bill has already been passed by the House of Representatives and has been referred to the Foreign Relations Committee in the Senate. That Committee plans an executive session on the legislation.

Senator Gravel has written to Senator J. William Fulbright, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee to explain to him the possible harm the bill could cause Alaskans.

The legislation would set an absolute moratorium on the on the taking of polar bear, without exception of any type.

The Alaska Democrat said such a moratorium would violate the precedent set by the Native Claims Settlement Act and the Ocean Mammal legislation which exempted the taking of animals for subsistence purposes by Alaskan Natives.

He also pointed out to Senator Fulbright that the State of Alaska has done a fine job of wild-life management, especially in protecting polar bears and that federal legislation was unnecessary to insure that pro-

tection.

Finally, the Senator voiced his criticism of the moratorium approach to game management.

"For Alaska," he said, "a moratorium is inappropriate and forces a hardship on innocent victims whose very life style is linked to the animals. This is especially true if the moratorium is to be of an unlimited duration, as is the case with this legislation.

"This resolution is a potential threat to the Native life style in Alaska. I see no reason for this moratorium bill to even be considered by the Congress.

"The State of Alaska is doing an excellent job in managing our wildlife and there is no other state in the country which has polar bears. I intend to do all

I can to see that this bill never becomes law," Senator Gravel said.