

Young secures \$25 million for rural sanitation

Alaska Congressman Don Young secured a major wetlands provision which will assist Alaska economic development and \$25 million for rural sanitation projects in the Clean Water Act reauthorization legislation.

Young, chairman of the House Committee on Resources and ranking Republican on the Transportation and Infrastructure (T&I) Committee, worked with the T&I Chairman, Rep. Bud Shuster (R-PA) in securing the Alaska provisions.

Young said the new Alaska wet-

lands provision removes the most "unfair burdens and recognizes the special circumstances in our state."

Young said there is currently no program which allows the State of Alaska and the federal government to jointly address the rural sanitation problem. Young's proposal will authorize \$25 million in grants to the State of Alaska. The federal grant funds can be used to finance up to 50 percent of the cost of the sanitation projects, with the State of Alaska responsible for the re-

mainder of the funding.

The State of Alaska has already requested \$22 million for rural sanitation programs in its capital budget this year, Young said. Over the past five years, the State has appropriated an average of \$25 million per year for these projects.

"Rural sanitation programs for clean water and sewage facilities are a priority issue for the Alaska Congressional Delegation," Young said. "This is a public health and safety issue that deserves the support of this Congress.

"Our village residents have suffered outbreaks of Hepatitis A and other related health problems for many years. This authorization will greatly assist us in our efforts to ensure that acceptable sanitation systems are available to all Alaskans in every region of the state."

Young said that since 1972, less than \$30 million has been provided through the Clean Water Act to assist in meeting the basic sanitation needs of Alaska villages.

"While most Americans take clean drinking water and flush toi-

lets for granted, the residents of rural Alaska must continually contend with waterborne diseases due to third world sanitation conditions," Young said. "More than half of the residents of Alaska's 230 villages rely on buckets or outhouses for sewage disposal. Most of these people also lack fresh water facilities in their homes."

"Despite the efforts to address the federal budget crisis, this program deserves immediate funding based upon its need and merits."