

# Announces Oil Pipeline Stipulations

Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel announced completion of construction stipulations which will permit the Interior Department to issue a right-of-way for the Trans Alaska Pipeline System to build a petroleum pipeline across federal lands in Alaska.

The Secretary said his next action will be to go before the Interior committees in the Senate and House of Representatives to inform them of his intention to lift portions of the land freeze in Alaska, so the Department can proceed with the processing of the TAPS right-of-way application.

"We now have," Secretary Hickel said, "a set of stipulations which will insure that the wildlife and ecology of the Arctic, along with the culture and opportunities of Alaska's native citizens, will be enhanced."

The 48-inch diameter pipeline proposed by TAPS would extend from Prudhoe Bay, on the Arctic Coast of the Beaufort Sea, to Valdez, a deep water port about 800 miles to the south, on the Gulf of Alaska.

In his announcement, the Secretary said, "There were many unknown and uncertain factors which had to be considered and met before these stipulations could be finalized.

"I believe that anyone who might have criticized us for not issuing these stipulations sooner failed to realize the magnitude of this project, or the effect—potentially harmful—on the environment of Alaska if we did not first thoroughly research all of the factors involved."

"For example," Secretary Hickel added, "these stipulations require that TAPS must build the pipeline in such a manner that where it crosses hundreds of miles of permafrost—permanently frozen ground—it will be insulated or separated from the earth by various means so that the hot oil flowing through the pipe does not thaw the ground, causing the line to sag, or even to rupture."

The stipulations issued are the rules which TAPS will be required to meet in the pipeline's construction and operation. They are designed to meet all of the environmental and ecological goals set forth by the Department based on research by its own scientists, independent scientists and authorities, and public hearings in Alaska.

Persons submitting testimony at these hearings included representatives of both conservation groups and the petroleum industry.

Secretary Hickel said the Bureau of Land Management will monitor construction practices for the pipeline and associated haul roads on federal lands. In addition, the BLM has been directed by the Secretary to "see that the full authority of your bureau is brought to bear to prevent any practices which might vary from the stipulations which have now been established."

The stipulations provide that any environmental damage caused by pipeline construction may

(Continued on page 16)

# Stipulations . . .

(Continued from page 2)

be repaired either by TAPS or the BLM, but the pipeline company will be obligated to bear the costs of such repair.

The "land freeze" referred to in Secretary Hickel's announcement is an order issued by the Department of the Interior in the previous administration, under which any land selections or title transfers on federal lands in Alaska would be prohibited pending resolution of claims on the land by Alaska natives.