

Interior Dept. budget includes Native projects

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A House-Senate conference has completed work on the Department of Interior's 1979 appropriations bill and placed restrictions on the use of the department's budget.

These restrictions, requested by Senator Ted Stevens, include prohibitions from using federal funds to lobby for or against legislation pending in Congress, to institute wilderness studies in the State of Alaska, or to implement steel shot regulations.

Stevens, the ranking minority member on interior appropriations subcommittee, was a member of the conference.

In addition to placing these restrictions on the DOI appropriations, Stevens added a number of amendments to the bill that were adopted by the conference.

Included among the projects for the State of Alaska are \$8.8 million for the construction of a gas distribution system at Barrow and \$15 million for the development of the gas fields in the Barrow area; \$300,000 to upgrade the Indian Health Service village-built clinic program; \$150,000 for initiation of an ambulatory health care demonstration project at the Anchorage Indian Health Service Hospital; \$2.8 million for the third phase of construction and improvement to the Tamgas Creek fish hatchery at Metlakatla; an additional \$5 million for the housing improvements program, which includes money to complete the Venetie housing project; \$1.2 million for four Forest Service research projects; \$600,000 for Native adult education programs; \$5 million for increased funding for handicapped Indian children; and \$150,000 for planning and design of the new Begich-Boggs visitors' center at Portage Glacier.

Stevens noted that even though he had been successful in increasing substantially the appropriations for Alaska, the total appropriations for the DOI and related agencies was more than a billion dollars less than the administration's budget request.