

# Aid to villagers for fuel costs

Low-income Alaskan residents will receive about \$5 million in aid to pay their heating bills this winter under legislation approved by a House-Senate conference committee last week.

The appropriations bill for the Interior Department and related agencies now goes to the House and Senate for routine approval.

About \$5 million will be distributed to low-income residents of Alaska under a formula based on the amount of cold days and the proportion of poor households in the state. Sen. Ted Stevens, ranking Republican

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# Aid for heating costs

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member of the Interior appropriations subcommittee, said the formula is fairer to Alaska than other proposals based on population and income levels.

Other provisions sponsored by Stevens that were included in the final bill are the following:

—\$29.7 million to expand the Interior Department's gas exploration program at Barrow.

—\$346,000 to expand the Ketchikan clinic, and \$200,000 to expand the Fort Yukon clinic.

Also approved were provisions directing the Indian Health Service to conduct a feasibility study of purchasing the Alaska Hospital and Medical Center as a replacement for the obsolete Native hospital in Anchorage.

Also in both House and Senate versions of the legislation, and thus not subject to the conference, was \$4.4 million to construct a 40-unit housing facility in Bethel to accompany the new Native hospital being built there.