

Leask optimistic about 1991 bill

Alaska Federation of Natives President Janie Leask said last week that she remains optimistic about passage this fall of an AFN-backed package of amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Leask also commended Rep. Don Young and Sen. Frank Murkowski

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Leask optimistic

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for their work on the amendments, aimed at protecting Native lands and corporations beyond 1991. Under current law, stock in Native corporations can be sold to outsiders in that year.

The amendments are aimed at extending that deadline.

Referring to recent concerns about the bill raised by the Interior Department, Leask said she is confident AFN can continue to work with the department to ensure passage of the amendments.

"After congressional hearings and meetings with Department of Interior officials last week we're optimistic that the 1991 amendments will be approved before Congress adjourns this fall," Leask said.

"There's been some confusion recently that the amendments will not be approved this year. That is not the case," she added.

The amendments were passed in the House July 28 without dissent, and on Aug. 4 the Senate subcommittee on public lands held a public hearing on the amendments.

Review of the legislation is expected to continue after the Senate returns from its recess Sept. 8.