

# ***Village of Elim Opposes Senate Land Claims Bill***

Forty-three residents of the native village of Elim, located on the Seward Peninsula, have signed a petition protesting any form of a land claims settlement that will reduce the amount of land now occupied by the village.

The village is currently located in the Norton Bay Reservation which was created in February of 1917.

The residents stated that all of the land within the reservation is used and occupied.

"This land is claimed, both due to our aboriginal usage and current usage, under the Executive Reservation status," the villagers wrote.

"These lands are used for subsistence hunting, fishing and trapping of our village and will continue to be essential for our livelihood.

"Our use and occupancy clearly established our right to the title to lands within the area of our reservation and we feel that the only fair land claims settlement would be confirmation of

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# ***Elim Opposes . . .***

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title to the lands within the Norton Bay reservation in the Native Village of Elim."

According to statistics of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, the reserve currently covers about 316,000 acres and has a population of about 170 people.

Under the native land claims bill proposed by the Senate Interior Committee, Elim is qualified for a withdrawal of land. However, the maximum amount of land for a village having an enrollment of less than 400 Natives is one township or 23,040 acres.

The bill provides that the various reserves set aside by Executive order, which Norton was, or legislation or Secretarial Order be revoked.

Although Elim might be eligible for additional subsistence use land, it appears that the maximum it could receive title to under the bill would be about 23,000 acres—almost 293,000 less that it can occupy now.

The bill referred to was reported out of the Senate Interior Committee but has not yet gone to the Senate floor. The House Interior Committee was scheduled to begin its consideration of the native claims issue last week and might well differ with the Senate committee.