

Stevens Village Gets More Backing from Native Groups

Two more native groups have come out in support of the suit filed by Stevens Village against the Trans Alaska Pipeline System. They are Fort Yukon and the Tanana Chiefs Conference.

The village council of Galena took a similar stand the last of April.

The suit, endorsed by Fort Yukon at a May 18 meeting and by the Tanana Chiefs Conference

at a meeting June 11 and 12, was filed by Alaska Legal Services on behalf of Stevens Village, Bettles, Rampart, Allakaket, and Minto early in February.

The five interior villages claimed that TAPS had not fulfilled its promises to give natives preferential employment and contract opportunities and thus withdrew earlier waivers that would have allowed the TAPS pipeline

to cross land claimed by the natives.

The court held that the villages' action was valid.

With Donald Peter as president the Fort Yukon Council resolved that it supports the people of Stevens Village in its efforts to to receive just compensation for land which it has historically used and owned.

In filing the suit, the resolution read, the people of Stevens Village subjected themselves to a great deal of pressure from parties hostile to the lawful interests of the Alaskan Natives.

In addition to the suit against TAPS, the Tanana Chiefs also supported suits filed by the five interior villages against the Secretary of the Interior Walter Hickel and against the State of Alaska.

The suit against Hickel, filed in Federal District Court in Washington, D.C., resulted in a preliminary injunction restraining the Secretary from granting TAPS a permit to build the pipeline or the haul road over land claimed by Stevens Village.

The Tanana Chiefs, the resolution read, support the actions taken by the five villages and encourage them to continue until just compensation is paid for their land.