

Transfer of Jurisdiction of Pet Four

WASHINGTON — Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, said he is pleased at the progress of Senate and House conferees who have tentatively agreed to transfer jurisdiction of the Petroleum Reserve No. Four (Pet 4) in Alaska from the Navy to the Department of Interior.

Gravel, who has been pushing legislation for such a transfer since December of 1973, fought his latest fight last July for transfer of the reserve, coupled with a study of socio-economic impact of exploration and possible development of oil and gas, as well as a study of the land resource values.

The conference committee on the Naval Petroleum Reserve legislation is scheduled to meet again Monday, with prospects of completing agreement by Dec. 19.

Gravel met with Charlie Edwardsen, who is representing the North Slope Borough and has been lobbying the Pet. Four legislation with members of the Conference Committee. The Alaska lawmaker said that Edwardsen and North Slope Borough Mayor Eben Hopson "have done a real service" in negotiating for the transfer with members of the Conference Committee. "They've obviously made a good case," Gravel noted.

The committee has tentatively agreed to retain jurisdiction of the Naval Reserves Numbers One, Two and Three with the Navy, but to shift jurisdiction of Pet. 4 to Interior.

Edwardsen reported to Gravel that the committee now is working on the particulars of the transfer and it appears that a study will be undertaken relative to the people, land and resource values of the total development of vast land area of the reserve.

Gravel had urged earlier this year that a task force be established under the direction of the Secretary of Interior, and include representatives of the state and local governments as well as others such as the Fish and Wildlife Service, to study and review the values and best uses of the public domain lands in Pet. 4. The study, he said, should include such values as subsistence lands for Natives, scenic, historical, recreational, fish and wildlife, wilderness and other purposes.