

Congressional Commentary

By U.S. REPRESENTATIVE DON YOUNG

(Ed. Note: the Tundra Times will accept columns from our delegation until we have made a final selection on our new Washington, D.C. Correspondent)

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The oil from Prudhoe Bay will flow soon, but from Valdez to where? The natural gas line will be constructed in the near future, but on whose land?

The answer to these and other questions on the energy crisis will, I hope, be answered during this 95th Congress and, as a result, the attention will be focused on our state. Many far reaching legislative decisions on the use of Alaska's land will be made during the next two years by many Congressmen who have never seen the beauty of our state and who have little knowledge of the abundance of our state's energy resources.

Fortunately, I will be in a position to influence these legislative decisions as a result of my appointment to certain committees of the House which will be dealing with activities directly related to Alaska.

One committee, the Merchant Marine and Fisheries Committee, will be considering legislation on such issues as oil spill liability and the routing of tanker traffic from Alaska to the West Coast.

The committee will be considering one proposal which would safely ship the oil from Valdez in American tankers to California and pipe it from there to refineries in the midwest. It is a project I strongly endorse and one which I will work hard to see adopted by the committee. In fact, I have already urged White House Energy Advisor James Schlesinger to join me in seeking immediate approval of this project. This proposal is the best alternative because it is environmentally less costly, it would be more readily constructed, and the oil would remain under American control.

Just as I feel it is crucial to keep the oil under U. S. control, I also believe the natural gas line should be built through

Alaska. As a member of the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, I will be able to insure that your Alaskan voice is heard when the gas line issue is considered.

Several preliminary steps have already been taken on the gas line construction issue. The U.S. and Canada signed a treaty at the end of January which is being hailed by supporters of the trans-Canada line as an indication that the line will go through Canada. This is simply not the

case. The treaty is no more than a goodwill gesture and should not be interpreted as a working agreement.

The Federal Power Commission has also received a preliminary recommendation favoring the Arctic Gas proposal which would pipe natural gas through Canada. This is only the first act of a multi-step process. My examination of this recommendation indicates that it is based on a series of misconceptions and poor assumptions.