

Bering drilling could hurt environment

Dear Editor:

It grieves me deeply to watch our government, in direct cooperation with large multinational oil companies, run roughshod over the independent lifestyle of the Alaskan coastal Native peoples, not to mention contribute to the general future decline of marine mammal and water fowl populations which they utilize to maintain their basic nutritive requirements and psychological well-being.

It is well-known fact by the people here on the Yupik coast that the Bering Sea-Bristol Bay area is probably the most productively fertile area in the world for perhaps a hundred different species of birds, five to six species of seal and walrus, and for the millions of salmon that annually migrate through, destined for interior river cobble beds to spawn, not to mention the untold numbers of other edible fish and clam species that people in these regions use on a daily basis to remain vital and predominantly self-sufficient human beings.

And there is no doubt that you too know these facts to be

true.

Could I offer a few specific reminders that:

1) There are a large number of toxic chemicals used in drilling muds during oil exploration activities and that they cumulatively will have an adverse affect on these area.

2) The extremely high decibel level associated with oil exploration and development cannot fail to place concomitant high stress levels on the animal life inhabiting the region.

3) The definite probability of a large oil spill will incalculably upset the ecorythms in these areas.

4) Without the admitted Arctic oil spill clean-up technology, any large spillage will be catastrophic for the life forms there.

5) Because of the narrowly prescribed econiches occupied by many of the faunal species living in the region, even a minor oil spill may mean the extinction of those species.

6) The legal question of ownership of the offshore areas in both the Bering Sea and Bristol Bay (as well as the rest

of O.C.S. Alaska) has not yet been determined in a court of law.

In light of the above, I (and most of the people I have come into contact with in the villages in these parts) protest the lease sales of O.C.S. tracts in the Bering Sea and Bristol Bay areas. I also protest the acceleration of this leasing schedule. Given the extreme sensitivity of the animal and human cultural populations in these regions, it seem insensitive and foolhardy to continue with this plan of energy-related industrial intrusion. It becomes irresponsible to the extreme to even contemplate this action when there are 700 already leased tracts in the lower states that have not even been touched by the oil companies because of their fear of protest by local citizens' groups there. It appears that once again Alaska's Native village peoples will be taken advantage of because of the natural difficulties they face of communication and organization.

Thank you kindly.

Frank J. Keim
Hooper Bay, Alaska 99604

Ally with white hunters to maintain hunt

Dear Editor:

Your April 29 editorial concerning the annual assault on the Pribilof seal harvest raises some points of interest in relation to the subsistence issue, since you note that "conservationists argue against the killings..."

If conservation indeed means "wise use," then the groups opposing the Pribilof harvest are certainly not conservationists. Rather, they might better be classified as "preservationists." Groups such as the Fund for Animals, Friends of Animals and the Animal Protection Institute are bent only

on ceasing the taking of all animals by hunting and trapping. Examine closely the possible motives of the white advocates of subsistence preference who do not themselves hunt or trap.

It will probably not take too many more incidents such as the situation in the Pribilofs before Alaska Natives will awake to the fact that the animal protection groups are ecstatic over the friction caused by the subsistence issue. After the Sierra Club, the VISTA volunteers, the Friends of the Earth and other environmental groups who masquerade under the guise of "conservation" have shown their

true feelings on the harvest of wild animals, birds and even fish. Natives will know that their only hope for continuing to take game will lie in an alliance with the whites who also hunt, trap and fish.

I am descended from an unbroken line of people who hunted and fished to supplement our diet; primarily though, I hunt to sustain my spirit. It is a part of my culture and I too, am willing to fight to preserve my right.

Respectfully,
Pete Buist