

Emerg. Repairs For Highways

WASHINGTON — Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, today introduced legislation providing for emergency repairs to Alaska highways, damaged by excessively heavy truck traffic supporting pipeline construction, and for a study of costs to rebuild the roads when the pipeline is completed.

The bill authorizing \$70 million under the federal aid to highways act, calls for an investigation and report to Congress by next June 30 by the Secretary of Transportation on the cost of emergency repairs during the pipeline construction.

The bill authorizes \$200,000 for the study which would require a final conclusion of the rebuilding costs no later than three months after completion of pipeline construction.

Since the pipeline is being constructed in the national interest to deliver North Slope oil to markets in the contiguous states, federal funding to restore the Alaska road system "is not only fully warranted but completely necessary to remedy the mammoth problem which is developing," Gravel said.

"This catastrophic damage to major segments of the state highway system is a direct result of the tremendous increase in highway traffic related to transportation requirements for construction of the pipeline," Gravel said.

Gravel hopes to have the bill included in the omnibus highway act being considered later this month by the Senate Public Works Committee, of which he is a member.