

Do you want Permanent Fund

When last year's distribution of the \$1,000 Permanent Fund distribution checks rolled around we will admit that we felt it was a monumental waste of money.

We were among those people who felt that just doling out cash to everyone in the state was a great way to waste the money and see nothing lasting for it.

At the time we thought of so many projects that could be done in rural Alaska villages — water, sewer, community centers, libraries, education projects, roads, and the like.

There is no doubt that there is a pressing need for such services in Alaska's Bush and that need will not go away.

But we are starting to wonder about making the Permanent Fund distribution program to Alaska's individuals go away also.

There is a move afoot in the halls of the Legislature to abolish the Permanent Fund distribution program and use the money being put into the Fund to pay for other projects which would be built, presumably in the community good.

We are also aware that the oil royalty revenues which make this state go and keep us operating are dwindling and we can't ignore the fact. Falling revenues usually herald cuts in much needed services.

But we are starting to wonder about the advisability of abolishing the Fund. We have read former Gov. Jay Hammond's comments on the Fund and we have read Tyonek Council President Don Standifer's comments on the Fund. And we tend to agree that it IS nice to have such a fund where the government gives to the people without having strings attached.

In many Alaska villages such a string-less deal has a lot to offer.

We also know of many people who, like the people of Tyonek, put the money to a good use. We know of one family who was able to make the downpayment on a house with the Fund.

We also have been reading other newspaper comments on keeping or abolishing the Fund and the overwhelming opinion seems to be 'keep the fund, forget the legislators!'

We would like to hear from you, the people of rural Alaska who usually bear the brunt of budget-cuts in Juneau.

What do you feel about this fund? Would you rather have a \$1,000 check in your pockets or the chance of a new community center?

Please let us know how you feel about the Fund. We will print your comments.

Send letters to the Tundra Times, 639 I St., Anchorage, Alaska, 99501.

