

Tyonek wants Fund maintained

To the Editor:

The following letter was sent to the Honorable Rep. Vern Hurlbert.

Dear Representative Hurlbert,
This letter is in regards to the state dividend program that presently exists, but what is expected to be cut off shortly.

At first, I along with others, felt the program was a ploy to get more people to flood into the big cities to give the cities a boost to their economy and to draw more people from down south, so there would be more demand for housing, jobs, etc. which in turn would justify more development to

meet the demands.

I still feel that way, however, after I realized how little the villages receive from the state coffers compared to the cities, I have a different feeling.

The state dividend program, as I have experienced it in 1982, is a good program. It's the first time this village has received any money from the state that we didn't have to "make the project public" "open it for public purposes," "form a separate corporation because the tribal government is not recognized," "sign a waiver of sovereignty," etc.

The people in this village

have finally received something from the State of Alaska, no strings attached!

The monies received from the state were not spent foolishly here in Tyonek, many people bought many worthwhile items, others have put the money into trust accounts.

At this time I would like to go on record as saying save the dividend program!

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Don Standifer
President
Native Village of
Tyonek

Hammond supports Fund

Letter Via the Editor to all Permanent Fund Dividend Applicants from former Gov. Jay Hammond.

Dear "Stockholder":

While some politicians salivate to spend your permanent fund dividends for you, most are scared spitless of touching those enormous state subsidized loan "dividends" enjoyed by a fortunate few — including many of them.

Yet, the latter cost all of you millions annually in lost interest earnings; while for each \$100,000 loaned, the borrower currently received a hidden, tax-free "dividend" of about \$3,000 a year for which you're paying indirectly.

Alaska now has well over one billion loaned out at lower interest. Interest these dollars could be earning all of you if invested in the permanent fund.

Where are those watchdogs of the public purse or constitutional purists demanding "equity" on this one? I'll tell you where: Standing right in line, panting to make out their loan "dividend" applications.

Of course, they'll argue the

nobility of purpose behind such programs: "They stimulate the economy," "provide housing," "create jobs," "enhance development," true. My problem is the gross inequity by which they do so.

Most Alaskans either don't know about, cannot qualify for, or do not wish to go into deeper debt to acquire a subsidized loan "dividend," moreover, each cited "noble purpose" — plus a multitude more — can be met with total equity through permanent fund dividends.

Want to reduce power costs? Defray interest rates? Improve health care? Reduce taxes? Enhance education? You can choose to use your permanent fund dividends for anyone — or none of the above.

Why should politicians feel it necessary to make all such choices for you? Of this year's anticipated (over four billion dollar) budget, is it really too much to let you decide how less than 1/20th of it can best meet your needs?

Using permanent fund dividends to fund, say, Susitna hydro, is totally inequitable. Why should those living beyond its

potential have their dividends used to fund a project from which they'll receive no service? Of course, if the people of the railbelt elect to have their dividends so used, that's quite another thing.

Here's a simple way to make that determination. Use the same service area concept utilized by local governments. If the majority residing in the prospective power "service area" vote to relinquish their dividends in behalf of hydro, so be it.

While this approach might not achieve 100 percent equity, it is far better than providing "stockholders" with no vote at all.

The major criterion in dispersing earnings from the "people's portfolio" — the permanent fund — should be equity. If someone can devise a better way to achieve equity than thru a cash distribution, I've not heard it.

Most schemes fall short and would substitute "Big Brothers" judgment for your own as to how your share can best be spent.

Many elected officials have expressed commendable con-

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Permanent Fund

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cern regarding equity. Hopefully, those among them now receiving state subsidized loan "dividends" will be dissuaded from eliminating your dividends while retaining theirs by that "still, small voice" of conscience.

However, for those who may be 'hard' of hearing, only you can turn the volume up by advising them by letter that your high esteem for them might be diminished, should they grab your dividends while keeping theirs. Do it now. Your investment of 20 cents for postage could yield a re-

turn of about \$350 this year alone.

Meanwhile, some investigative reporter might make quite a name for him/her self by publicizing a list of those elected officials who now receive, at your expense, state subsidized loan "dividends" (upon which, of course, they get to set the interest rates).

Conflict of interest? Perish the thought. That's compatibility of interest, friend.

Incidentally, that "name" our intrepid investigator would make among those politically announced special "dividend" recipients, would not be printed here. This is a family newspaper.

Sincerely,

Jay S. Hammond