

Bill aids vessels to remote areas: authorizes 200-mile funds

Vessels taking cargo to remote areas of Alaska could be exempted from certain inapplicable safety requirements if this is the only way to get supplies through, by an amendment added by U. S. Senator Ted Stevens to the Coast Guard Authorization on the Senate floor Wednesday.

Stevens' amendment is designed to alleviate hardship in such areas as Kodiak Island and the Alaska Peninsula which often must rely on obsolete landingcraft for fuel, construction supplies and food.

The Senate also authorized \$100 million for Coast Guard

activities related to enforcement of the 200-mile zone, as requested by U.S. Senators Warren Magnuson and Stevens.

Authorizations were also given for the construction of a Loran C advanced ship and aircraft navigational aid system at Narrow Cape, Alaska, and construction of Coast Guard family housing quarters at Sitka was approved.

These authorizations still require appropriations to be funded.

Under Stevens' cargo vessel amendment, a permit could be granted to a vessel engaged in

transporting cargo, including bulk fuel, within the State of Alaska if: the vessel weighs 300 gross tons or less; it doesn't present an immediate threat to the safety of life or environment; and the vessel was operating in Alaska June 1, 1976, or is a replacement for such a vessel.

This exemption would apply in an emergency situation or in a case where cargo could not reasonably be transported by other means. A permit for this exemption could be issued for a specific trip or for a period of up to one year.

"Alaskans in remote areas have too often suffered a hardship in not being able to get food and fuel just because the only available transport did not come up to inflexible federal standards designed for coastal trade between major cities in the Lower 48. This amendment should

eliminate this intolerable situation," Stevens said.

The bill now goes to a joint Senate-House conference where differences in the two versions of the bill will be reconciled.