

# Gravel Writes Carter on Whales

WASHINGTON--Saying the International Whaling Commission has "exceeded its authority," Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, asked President Carter Monday to file formal objection against a ruling which would prohibit the subsistence taking of bowhead whales.

In a letter to President Carter, Gravel said: "What so often seems to be forgotten in this controversy is that this situation involves two "endangered species"--the Arctic Eskimo as well as the bowhead whale. The decision of the IWC to move from an unlimited bowhead hunt to a zero quota is not only excessive but completely arbitrary. Such a recommendation only serves to emphasize the utter insensitivity of the IWC for the physical and cultural well-being of America's Native inhabitants."

He went on to say, "The Eskimos know better than anyone else the importance of preserving a healthy stock of bowhead whales."

He also said "The Native peoples involved have pledged to me their complete support in any cooperative endeavors which are necessary to ensure continued bowhead stock viability" assuming objection is made to the zero-quota ruling.

Gravel said estimates of bowhead population range from 600 to 2,500, and said the IWC had acted without sufficient knowledge in making its ruling.

He also said the IWC had no authority over subsistence hunting, only over commercial hunting, and said the Eskimos' whale hunts were in no way commercial.