

Ruling delayed on NSB census suit

The Associated Press

PALMER — Assured the state won't hand out any money based on population until February, a superior court judge has declined to put an immediate halt to the readjustment of the census figures for the North Slope Borough.

Anchorage, Fairbanks and the Kenai and Mat-Su Boroughs object to the proposed inclusion of 1,844 oil workers in the population of the North Slope Borough. The change was authorized by emergency

order in the waning days of the Hammond administration.

Avrum Gross, a former state attorney general, argued against the injunction, saying it would hurt his clients in the borough, which has \$11 million in potential tax revenues at stake.

The Railbelt communities say they stand to lose \$640,000 in state revenue sharing based on population.

Steve Morrisset, attorney for the Mat-Su Borough, said

after the hearing that the North Slope Borough has bonded indebtedness of more than \$1 billion, yet it has only between 2 percent and 4 percent of the state's population.

He said most of the oil workers make their homes in the Railbelt communities which must provide them a full range of traditional government services, while the North Slope Borough provides only daily trash pickups and electricity.