

Red Dog land exchange wins unanimous Senate approval

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Senate has unanimously approved the land exchange between the NANA Regional Corporation and the National Park Service, according to Alaska Senators Frank Murkowski and Ted Stevens.

The land exchange will allow for the development of the largest known zinc deposit in the United States and a significant amount of lead, gold and silver in the Red Dog Mine in Northwest Alaska.

Murkowski sponsored the legislation which will provide NANA with a corridor to build an access road from the Red Dog Mine to a port site located in the northwest corridor of the Cape Krusenstern National Monument.

"I'm extremely pleased the land exchange received unanimous Senate approval," Murkowski said. "The land exchange will permit the road to be constructed on the most economically and environmentally sound route."

Under the agreement, NANA is to receive about 95,000 acres of monument land and will relinquish about 103,000 acres it could have claimed under the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act.

The estimated life of the project is 50 years, and the annual income from these jobs is estimated to be about \$15 million,

Murkowski said.

"Presently there is no economic base within the NANA Region that can offer even remotely sufficient job opportunities to its residents," Murkowski said on the Senate floor. "The area's unemployment rate is an alarming 70 percent, but when the mine is fully developed, it will create about 400 full-time jobs for residents of the NANA region and NANA shareholders."

"I want to commend two of the most important conservation organizations in our country, the National Audubon Society and the National Parks and Conservation Association, for coming forward in support of S.444," Senator Stevens said on the Senate floor. "At a very early stage in the process, these organizations recognized the massive benefits that accrue to the Cape Krusenstern National Monument as a result of a land exchange, and made their views public. I greatly appreciate their honesty and their concern for the interests of the Alaska Native shareholders of the NANA Regional Corporation."

I want to congratulate my colleague, Senator Murkowski, who has shepherded this major piece of legislation through committee and floor consideration with great skill and finesse."