

letters

The following letter was written by AFN President Morris Thompson in response to remarks published elsewhere by former gubernatorial candidate and speaker of the Alaska House of Representatives Tom Fink in which Fink challenged the necessity for the amendments to the Land Claims Act currently being considered by the U.S. Congress.

ANCSA

amendments

Alaska Federation of Natives,
Inc.
550 West 8th Avenue
Anchorage, Alaska 99501
March 28, 1979

Dear Editor:

I read with dismay recent comments by Mr. Tom Fink regarding the inclusion of ANCSA technical amendments and subsistence issues in both the Huckaby and Udall bills. A bit of history may be helpful to refocus attention on the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the amendments we are seeking, and the subsistence issue. The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act was passed in 1971 after six years of congressional hearings, public debate, editorial comments and hard work by all concerned. The Settlement was endorsed unanimously by the Governor, Congressional delegation, the President and the U.S. Congress, and the majority of Alaska Native people.

Recognizing that the legislation was far from perfect, previous administrations of AFN and the Native leadership — with support of the state government and our elected officials — have, in succeeding years sought technical amendments to improve this legislation. That effort is continuing in both the Huckaby, Udall, and Merchant Marine bills. Should these technical amendments be secured, they will not materially alter the Act in that the Bill still will convey approximately 40 million acres of land, the financial settlement will still be \$962.5 million, and the number of stockholders will not be increased. Furthermore, these amendments have undergone public hearings before the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee, the House of Representatives, and the Senate Energy Committee over the last several years. There is general consensus again among the delegation and our governor that these amendments should be approved. The technical amendments are attempts to secure what was previously committed in legislation.

As to subsistence, Mr. Fink also makes mention that subsistence should not be considered in d-2 legislation, and makes mention that this issue should be dealt with by the state government and not the federal government. Again, some facts may be beneficial. The conference report accompanying the Settlement Act specifically charged the secretary and the governor with protecting the subsistence lifestyle of rural Alaskans (it is our belief that this includes both Native and non-Natives).

In this limited space and with these few words it is difficult to discuss and properly present the significance of the subsistence lifestyle for those many rural Alaskans who are still

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practicing the subsistence way of life, as they have for generations. AFN has constantly indicated that the subsistence users are those people who are directly dependent upon the land and its resources. Considering the limited resources that are harvested by subsistence hunters and fishermen and on the other hand considering the tremendous food and cultural impact it has, it is hard to fathom how anyone could oppose its continuance.

Mr. Fink indicates subsistence should be dealt with by the state government. AFN has supported an unprecedented congressional granting of state fish and game management on Federal lands. We sought legislation on regionalization of fish and game boards in the Alaska Legislature. Legislation sponsored by Speaker of the House Terry Gardiner addressed this issue. It is unfortunate that the legislature has not passed Representative Gardiner's bill. The legislation currently being discussed in Juneau is a watered down version of that bill and is unacceptable to many legislators in Juneau.

The Settlement Act is far from a perfect piece of legislation. We feel however, that the economic impact on all sectors and all people of the State has been felt by this legislation and we encourage as many individuals and friends we have to support the efforts to improve the legislation and continue a way of life that has lasted for generations.

Sincerely,
Morris Thompson
President
Alaska Federation of Natives,
Inc.

Sinking heart

Alaska State Legislature
House of Representatives
H. Pappy Moss
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811
March 28, 1979

Dear Editor:

The March 21 issue of the Tundra Times headlined that the Regional Game Boards has been quashed. As a co-sponsor of HB 193 from District 19, it was with a sinking heart and a feeling of frustration that I saw the urban areas take pot shots at a bill dear to our hearts in the Bush. It is a typical lack of concern that is shown by most urban people for the lifestyle of the bush areas.

After recovering from my shock and dismay, however, I must say the battle is not over yet. I will do everything in my power to support the passage of the original bill.

I appreciate all the messages from you folks in the Bush, and I will do my best to hear and heed your concerns.

Respectfully,
H. Pappy Moss

Rudeness

515 E. 12th Avenue
Anchorage, AK 99501
March 30, 1979

Dear Editor:

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This Tuesday evening I listened to the television program "Town Meeting of the Air" about the important issue of offshore oil and gas exploration. I listened as the mayor of the North Slope was rudely interrupted and other representatives of areas directly affected by offshore oil and gas exploration were not given sufficient chance to air their concerns and opinions.

I am sure I am not the only one upset by this. After many attempts I was able to get my call in to Juneau and I directed this message to Governor Hammond and to the moderator of the program, Jane Anvik.

"As a citizen of Anchorage, which is as mentioned overrepresented, I would like to give my time to the representatives from Barrow and others of the Arctic who must live among these decisions. Time must be made available for their comments and their knowledge of pure Arctic science."

This comment was not broadcast and so I am writing this letter to let it be known that some of us down here want to know what the people in Northern Alaska are saying.

Sincerely,
Jean Graves

News topics

March 23, 1979

Mr. Thomas Richards Jr.
Editor and Publisher
Tundra Times

Dear Editor:

I'm a student at Bethel Regional High School. Our whole class in Land Claims has been looking at your Tundra Times newspaper. We have gathered up the most important subjects in the Tundra Times, and we have selected five topics that we would like to see more news reporting on. Here are the five topics:

1. Education
2. Land Claims
3. Village Corporations
4. AFN Business
5. Native Culture

Of course we like reading the sports articles in the Tundra Times, and also the human interest stories.

Mr. Richards, I would like to say, "Keep up your good work and thanks a whole bunch."

Sincerely yours,
Carolyn M. Patsy
Student

Where's Dan?

March 24, 1979

Dear Editor:

In January my students and (See LETTERS, Page 9)

Letters to the Editor are invited and should be addressed to 639 'I' Street, Anchorage, Alaska 99501. The Tundra Times reserves the right to edit letters which are excessively long, and to edit or omit letters which may be considered libelous.

letters

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I wrote letters to your newspaper. I wanted to write to thank you for publishing a few of our letters. We received several letters from Alaskans and I feel the kids have a much better understanding of our 49th State.

One man was kind enough to send us an informative letter, newspapers, and about 50 slides. My problem is that no address was sent with this material. All we know is his name is Dan from Sand Point, Alaska. My students wrote several thank you notes that I would love to mail. I thought possibly you could print this information and Dan would send us his last name and address.

Thank you again!

Sincerely,
Miss Mitchell