

Subsistence Law

Governor Jay Hammond told the Tundra Times that he is in agreement with Fish and Game Commissioner Skoog's decision to delay consideration of regulations to implement the subsistence hunting and fishing law until the spring, 1979 meeting of the Boards of Fish and Game.

We disagree with this tact, and strongly encourage the Governor and Commissioner Skoog to immediately begin the process of implementing the subsistence law which was enacted by the last legislature. If consideration of proposals to implement the law is delayed until spring, it is likely that such proposals may not take effect until late in the summer of 1979.

We believe that it was the intent of the Legislature to provide a swift solution to problems related to the subsistence issue. A delay by the Hammond Administration works contrary to the intent of the Legislature, in our opinion.

Some disturbing signals have issued from the Department of Fish and Game in the Hammond Administration. Governor Hammond told us, "It was readily apparent from the Department of Fish and Game that they could not accommodate a Division of Subsistence." This was the basis for the opposition of the Hammond Administration to creating a subsistence division. This position prevailed while the legislature considered subsistence legislation.

Now we are told (by Commissioner Skoog) that "no action will be taken on subsistence issues until the Board's spring meeting." In the absence of positive action to implement the law, problems such as those resulting in the arrest of four elderly Ahtna fishwheel operators last summer will be with us again next summer.

The Governor tells us he cares about subsistence protection. He can demonstrate his concern by immediately allowing the implementation of the subsistence law. The Legislature has already faced up to the issue. It is time for the Governor now to do the same.