

Hickel Signs Land Claims Measure

Governor Walter J. Hickel signed the State Native Land Claims bill this week in Juneau.

When implemented, the bill will provide a minimum settlement of \$50 million to native groups and it will be administered by a native corporation.

The bill will become effective only when Congress enacts a land claims settlement in Alaska and after the land freeze is lifted by the Department of the Interior.

The bill was drafted through the cooperative efforts of the Native Lands Claims Task Force, the State and the Department of the Interior.

The Task Force was led by Rep. Willie Hensley of Kotzebue with the legal counsel provided by Barry Jackson of Fairbanks, Clif Groh of Anchorage and Roger Connor of Juneau.

Atty. Gen. Edgar P. Boyko furnished the largest share

of work for the Governor and the State. Robert Vaughan, deputy secretary for the Department of the Interior furnished the work for that department.

Gov. Hickel called the

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SIGNS BILL . . .

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measure one of the most important to be enacted by this year's legislature.

"This is a giant step forward in achieving a just solution to the native land claims problem," he declared.

"Alaska had made it clear beyond any shadow of a doubt that it wants the land claims issue settled, that it is willing to take the first step to see that it is settled, and that all Alaskans are willing to work together to see a solution," he stated.