

NSB supports state in census suit

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The North Slope Borough will support the State of Alaska in its defense of an emergency regulation which increased the amount of revenue sharing money sent to the borough.

The Borough intends to support the state's position that it had the right to declare that some 1,900 oil field workers are residents of the North Slope Borough, not of the communities where their houses or apartments are.

The declaration means that the Borough would receive an additional \$600,000 in federal revenue sharing and would be able to increase property taxes on oil company facilities on the North Slope. That increase could account for millions of dollars annually.

The emergency regulation signed by outgoing Gov. Jay Hammond on Nov. 29 did not

create a new situation on the revenue sharing matter, according to one borough attorney, Martin Farrell of Anchorage.

Farrell said that the regulation reverted the revenue sharing situation to its previous status of 1981 when the State Department of Labor convinced Hammond that the North Slope workers should be counted as residents of the communities in which they declared their residences such as Fairbanks, Anchorage, the Matanuska-Susitna Borough or even communities outside the state.

"That decision was made on inaccurate information," said Farrell, who said that Hammond finally was convinced that the North Slope Borough should be able to claim the workers as residents and the emergency order was signed.

Farrell said that the U.S. Census Bureau supports the state's re-enacted definition of

resident which allows the North Slope Borough to claim the workers.

The North Slope Borough contends that it faces a serious unanticipated shortage of money because of the changed ruling.

That order was challenged in court last week by the Anchorage, Fairbanks North Star, Matanuska-Susitna and Kenai Boroughs which contended that Hammond erred in declaring the emergency. The first error, said the suit, was that the state government failed to show a finding of an emergency and that no actual emergency existed.

A hearing before Judge Beverly Cutler of Palmer was postponed early Monday to allow the state more time.

Cutler granted a delay until Dec. 15 after being assured that no funds would be distributed until after the Dec. 15 hearing.