

House Committee approves 1991 package

WASHINGTON — The House Interior Committee today unanimously approved a package of amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA). The legislation, which is expected to be considered by the full House in late July, is sponsored by Congressman Don Young. (R-Alaska).

Under the terms of the original act, corporate shares in Alaska Native corporations become fully alienable in 1991. As this deadline draws near, there has been concern in rural communities that the unrestricted sale of stock could result in the loss of lands conveyed under the Act.

To address this concern, the bill,

HR 4162, provides for the continuation of restrictions contained in ANCSA, unless an individual Native corporation takes action to eliminate or modify the sale restrictions. Dissenter's rights are provided where the corporation elects to continue stock restrictions. In addition to clarification of corporate share ownership rights, the bill provides for land ownership protections.

As part of the mark-up, the committee approved a substitute amendment offered by Rep. Young which provides for various technical amendments as well as a change to section 7 (c) of the original bill. The change more clearly states that nothing in the amending

legislation can be construed by a court to affect governmental powers, if any, in villages.

"This bill is intended to make sure that the land conveyed under ANCSA is not lost over time," Young said. "My goal is to protect the land, which is the most important part of ANCSA.

"The substitute bill approved today provides for additional dissenter's rights and states more clearly that any claim of governmental powers cannot be construed to start from these amendments," Young said. "These amendments deal only with stock and land ownership; governmental authority is not a part of these amendments in any way."