
Takes it from people

WASHINGTON — Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, said the President's plan to make the decision in the White House on the routing of the natural gas pipeline from Alaska's North Slope, "takes it away from the people most technically able to do it."

Gravel said his concern is that those involved in reviewing and assessing the data to be submitted to the President before Feb. 1, 1977 by the Federal Power Commission, will be "more politically motivated, than technically motivated."

President Ford outlined his proposal in his Energy Message to Congress last week. He said he would send legislation to Congress "to develop expeditiously the 24 trillion cubic feet of estimated gas reserves on the North Slope of Alaska."

Gravel, who introduced the first pipeline bill in the Senate to expedite a decision by the Federal Power Commission, said he feels the Federal Power Commission should make the technical decision first and Congress should make the political decision.

He said the President's proposal for legislation that would have the federal agencies involved in gathering the data, submit it to the President who would make the decision on the route subject to review by Congress just "adds another layer" in the decision making process.

Gravel said he questioned whether the President's proposal would limit judicial review if Congress disagrees with his decision. "If not, it could result in 10 years of litigation," he noted.

Gravel's bill would limit judicial review and have Congress either approve or disapprove the decision of the FPC. He said the FPC can meet a deadline if its decision is removed from judicial review.