

# Gov. Hammond announces—

## To sue secretary

Gov. Jay S. Hammond announced that the state will file suit within the next two weeks against the Secretary of the Interior and other federal officials to enjoin the pending OCS oil and gas lease sale in the Northern Gulf of Alaska.

"We have tried hard to work out an acceptable middle ground with the Department of the Interior but have been met with a deaf ear at every turn. We now have no recourse left but to go to court."

Hammond has repeatedly requested that the federal government grant the state a delay of one to two years to avoid severe social, economic and environmental disruptions in the

coastal communities adjacent to the sale area.

"We have never opposed OCS leasing in concept — only the timing of its imposition on the state," said Hammond.

"I think I should make clear at the outset," Hammond said, "that we intend to make a major commitment of resources to this lawsuit. We will attempt to enjoin the sale from occurring. If we cannot enjoin the sale, we will press for a full trial on the issues. We will pursue whatever appeals are available, if that becomes necessary. This is going to be no symbolic gesture — we are going all the way."

Hammond said that a larger number of federal agencies support the state on the need for a delay and the state was presently receiving a number of inquiries from groups wanting to join the suit.

He added that the lawsuit will be filed in the District Court in Washington, D.C., where at least two other OCS lawsuits are presently pending.