

Arctic Research Bill passes committee

The Arctic Science Bill which seeks to establish a uniform policy of research in the Alaskan Arctic, late Monday was unanimously adopted by a Senate committee and forwarded to the full U.S. Senate for consideration.

The bill was passed by the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee at the request of U.S. Sen. Ted Stevens, a member of the committee and one of the co-sponsors of the bill. The bill was sponsored by U.S. Sen. Frank Murkowski of

Alaska, Stevens, and U.S. Sen. Henry Jackson of Washington.

It sets up an Arctic Science Policy Council to promote research, establish a centralized system for the collection and retrieval of scientific data, and to determine procedures for setting priorities and paying for Arctic Study.

The policy council is to be composed of a chairperson, two Alaskan experts in the field of Arctic research, and two additional members representing the federal government and knowledgeable in the study of cold climates. All members would be appointed by the president.

An Arctic Science Commission, composed of individuals with scientific expertise, Arctic residents, representatives from private industry and a member of the U.S. Coast Guard also would be formed.

Representatives of the North Slope had objected to the current version of the bill because it defined Arctic as an area which included the Aleutian Islands.