Senator: State's ANWR stand vague

To the editor:

With the current national concern for energy security and a fair amount of national editorial support, I've been optimistic about the chances of Congress supporting Alaskans' position for exploring the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

Unfortunately, in the first major congressional focus on the issue, we may have lost some ground.

Speaking as an Alaskan, I fear we may have stubbed our toe a bit coming out of the starting box the other day when we presented our position to the rest of the country.

The hearing June 4 before the Senate Energy Committee in Washington, D.C., was to hear the State of Alaska's position on ANWR.

Although our governor testified full support for opening the area, the public attention focused on the discrepancy over how a "core calving area" should be handled.

The vagueness of the state's position and inability to specifically identify a "core" area, or to describe how further study would be conducted, confused the issue for many people.

My concern is that confusion will be used to weaken our position and give many members of Congress a reason to vote against opening ANWR.

I know you'll be following this issue closely in the months ahead.

Sincerely,
Sen. Frank Murkowski
Washington, D.C.