

letters

Governor Hammond says whale hunting should continue

State of Alaska
Office of the Governor
Juneau, Alaska
July 18, 1977

The Honorable Juanita Kreps
Secretary of Commerce
Commerce Building
14th Street
Washington, D.C. 20230

Dear Madam Secretary:

The recent resolution to prohibit all taking of bowhead whales by the International Whaling Commission may impose a needless hardship upon the economic and cultural systems of certain Alaskan citizens residing along the northwest and north coast of the state. I urge you to protest the I.W.C. resolution on bowhead whales as provided for in the convention.

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Interior fuel supply may be critical

Jerry R. Austin
Agent, Chevron U.S.A.
St. Michael, AK 99659

Governor Jay Hammond
Juneau, Alaska
July 20, 1977

Dear Governor Hammond:

Every year in the lower Yukon River villages there is a shortage of fuel, especially in the late Winter and Spring. Both gasoline and heating fuel usually run out in April in almost every village. This problem is partially due to the fact that the retailers have in most cases failed to add storage to keep up with rising demands.

We are faced this summer with a new problem: many of the village stores have been purchased in the past few years by the Native Corporations in the area, and they are having a difficult time getting the money together to order the fuel. In some cases the problem has been with the individual corporations, but in many cases it has been at the regional level of Calista and Bering Straits where village money has not been made available that normally would have.

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Commissioner Burton fires back at the press, Nels Anderson

The Honorable Nels A. Anderson, Jr.
P.O. Box 234
Dillingham, Alaska 99576

Dear Representative Anderson:

Since you choose to continue to take my recent remarks out of context, and have now made a personal attack upon my integrity and intentions, I am compelled to respond to your most recent public letter to the Governor.

My expressed concern is a valid concern for law enforcement for all of Alaska; and particularly for the documented attempts, by known violent radical groups, to influence various portions of the Alaska population for their purposes. These attempts have not been limited to any one ethnic group, but have included groups such as the American Indian Movement, the SLA, and similar organizations whose avowed purpose is to commit violent acts to obtain their desired results through illegal methods.

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letters, continued . . .

Whale hunting . . .

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Eskimos residing along Alaska's coast have taken bowhead whales for centuries. These magnificent mammals provide large quantities of much needed protein for a self sufficient people who have adapted to life in a harsh environment. The whale symbolizes and helps sustain this way of life. A complete closure would unnecessarily hasten the disintegration of a culture already embattled with western technology. Ironically, the rapid changes in part are being brought about because of the United States profligate use of nonrenewable resources, principally, fossil fuels. This has made it necessary to mobilize Alaska's arctic resources with consequent impact upon rural communities by substituting a cash economy for what was a few years ago, an economy based upon sharing, barter and individual harvest of renewable resources.

Alaska Department of Fish and Game Marine Mammal Biologists, perhaps the most knowledgeable of all biologists about the arctic marine ecosystem have informed me that there is no compelling evidence that the modest use of bowhead whales by Alaskans is having a detrimental effect upon the resource. To the contrary, they suggest there are a number of indices which support the proposition

that the whale population is considerably larger than estimated by the Marine Mammal Commission or the I.W.C. and further that the population is increasing.

I support and urge the institution of a comprehensive management and research effort by the National Marine Fisheries Service so that an adequate data base can be assembled to hasten full restoration of this important species. In addition, I also support interim management regulations. Such regulations should address geographic quotas, humane methods and means of take, wasteful take, participation in whaling (limited entry), required equipment and seasons. The State of Alaska possesses considerable expertise in regulating marine mammals in the high arctic and we are willing to work with the National Marine Fisheries Service toward an equitable solution of this problem.

Once again, I am disappointed that the federal government has participated in a proceeding that may impact only citizens of this state without prior notice of intentions and trust that in the future we will be informed of such impending matters. We may well be of assistance in avoiding needless strife and difficulties.

Finally in closing I urge that you protest the I.W.C. resolution and that it not be invoked. Instead let's work together to establish a management regime as called for in the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972 and in the Endangered and Threatened Species Act of 1973.

Sincerely,
Jay S. Hammond

Governor

Interior fuel . . .

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The result of this has created a problem we have never experienced before in this area. The carrier, Black Navigation Co. Inc., has delivered virtually every order that I have given them, and there is nothing left to deliver until the corporations get some money to finance their fuel purchases. As a result of this Black Navigation has understandably shifted some of its equipment to the Nenana area operation. While they have left adequate tugs and barges to handle normal incoming orders, both they and I are concerned that the corporations, if they do not get funding, will be so late in their ordering that it will be very difficult if not impossible to handle the rush in the fall (August-September) due to normal bad weather and poor tides.

At present there is approximately 1,500,000 gallons in outstanding orders that usually come in but not this summer. Any effort you and your staff can make to alleviate this problem will be greatly appreciated by everyone operating and living in this area. The time to cure the annual spring fuel shortage is now, rather than flying it in next year at a much greater cost to everyone.

Very truly yours,
Jerry Austin

letters continued . . .

Burton fires back . . .

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I do not take my oath of office lightly, and in 23 years as a law enforcement officer in Alaska, this is the first incident in which I have been accused of being a racist. I would submit that I have not changed today from what I have been for the last 23 years. If I am, as you say, a racist to the degree that I should be dismissed from my job, I am surprised that this complaint has not arisen before now. If my actions ever become influenced by *any* special interest group I will resign rather than capitulate.

As a legislator and professional leader of Alaska, I think it would behoove you and other leaders to also share my concern and see that we work together to insure that outside forces, attempting to assert themselves, and seeking to take advantage of the current social pressures which many of our people in Alaska are under today, do not succeed. If you, or any other leader, fails to recognize the fact that not only some of the Alaska natives - but other segments of the population of Alaska - are under immense social pressure from one direction or another, and therefore highly vulnerable to being influenced by highly

skilled, dedicated radical groups, then I would submit that we are doing an injustice to the State and the people of Alaska.

Again, I will reiterate that I never said that the Alaska Natives were going to blow up the pipeline - *that was the statement of the news media*. As you have read, I was concerned about the influence on *all* people of Alaska from the various pressure groups as I have mentioned above.

To coin a phrase, I do not like the statements that you have made either; however, I will defend your right to do so.

In closing, I would just like to make the observation that the

only mention of racism has come from you. I have never given any indication of race entering into any decisions or comments that I have made. I would be happy to discuss this with you - or anyone - at any time, personally, at your convenience when you are in Juneau or upon my next visit to Dillingham, (which remains one of my favorite places in Alaska since the days when I lived there).

Sincerely yours,
Richard L. Burton

Commissioner of
Public Safety