

Interior Secretary Designate

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Interior Secretary designate, Stanley K. Hathaway, said “clearly the social and economic impact” of a pipeline to deliver North Slope gas to American markets, “must be an integral part of studies” being prepared by the Department of the Interior.

Hathaway, who returned today to the Senate Interior Committee conducting hearings on his nomination to be Secretary of the Interior, gave a written response to questions asked by Sen. Mike

Gravel, D-Alaska on a series of Alaskan issues.

Hathaway, who appears well on his way to Senate confirmation, with the “enthusiastic endorsement” of a panel of governors, today said that major decisions on the use of federal land or resources cannot be made “without consultation with the state involved.”

His answer was in response to a question about his view of federal-state relationships and

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whether he would support extension of the Joint Federal-State Land Use Planning Commission, established under

terms of the Land Claims Settlement Act.

On extension of the Commission, Hathaway said he wasn't familiar with it, but promised to "look into it and its federal role" if confirmed.

Hathaway also took a neutral position on questions regarding easements across federal lands in advance of conveyance of land to Alaskan Natives under terms of the settlement act, but said he would look into this "as quickly as possible and, as soon as I have an understanding of the issues involved, I will try to bring the matter to a resolution."

On the subject of designation of transportation and utility corridors across Alaska, Hathaway said "a question of this magnitude cannot be resolved without adequate input from the state and the Natives themselves."

Gravel said although Hathaway obviously didn't want to get locked into a position on a number of issues until he has had an opportunity to study them, "his support for studying the social and economic impact as part of an overall environmental study augers well for future development in Alaska, including leasing of the Outer Continental Shelf and gas pipeline construction."

The Alaska lawmaker asked Hathaway's position on revenue sharing, providing for distribution of 37-1/2 per cent of revenues from OCS development to the adjacent state, as well as full involvement of the state and its planning agencies in the planning and decision making processes.

The nominee said the federal government "needs to take a hard look at such proposals as revenue sharing, impact assistance, and involving the states in decisions" affecting them.

Hathaway said he realized "the high priority that the potential resources of the OCS can play in the country's drive toward energy self-sufficiency" and said he preferred not to take a position on the overall issue until he could be "thoroughly briefed."

Gravel said that although Hathaway's responses "are not as full and complete as we had hoped they might be, his commitment to state involvement in the decision-making process will help to assure Alaskans a voice when these issues are determined."

On other issues, Hathaway said he is "in general sympathy with the policy of Indian self-determination," feels that exploration and development of Naval Petroleum Reserves have been given the "highest priority" by the President and that the question of whether it is managed by the Navy or Interior is of "secondary importance".

Hathaway said he will affirm his early attention to the environmental stipulations for construction of the trans Alaska oil pipeline, now underway, and the "commitment that they will be honored."

He was responding to concerns raised that, due to pressure to get the pipeline built, some of the stipulations are not being followed.