

Senator Mike Gravel Enters Secret Memorandum Into CR

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Senator Mike Gravel (D-Alaska) today (Feb. 3) entered into the Congressional Record a secret corporate memorandum written for the Atomic Industrial Forum.

Senator Gravel said the memo reveals "a plan to resort to hidden influence and outright deception in an attempt to keep taxpayer and rate payer money flowing into the coffers of the nuclear establishment."

The memorandum outlines a new million-dollar information program to be undertaken by the AIF. The AIF is a non-profit industry association funded by nuclear manufacturers and utilities.

Senator Gravel read the following quotes from the memorandum:

"More work should... go into direct article placement, to minimize the filtration factor of the reporters and editors.

"... The time is ripe for the PAIP staff to ghost-write substantive features for well-known experts and to place these with major consumer publications."

Senator Gravel, a longtime critic of nuclear power, said in his Senate remarks: "Through the

techniques outlined in this memorandum, the AIF hopes to convince the public that the real questions and real problems of nuclear power don't exist."

The Senator said the AIF "has every right to present its case to the public. But the presentation should be straight-forward, not ghost-writing under the names of celebrities, not planting news stories over the heads of reporters and editors who may find AIF statements to be unnewsworthy or untrue."

He cited one example in which a pro-nuclear article signed by Frank T. Marin of the Copley News Service proved to be "virtually identical, word for word" with an AIF press release.

In the article, Martin identified the AIF as an "international, non-profit association," but did not cite its connection with the nuclear industry. Martin did not say that the story he signed was written by the AIF.

The existence of the memo was first made public in an article Jan. 17 in the New York Times.

Senator Gravel said he was entering the full memo into the Record because "the memo's more candid remarks were not cited in the Times article."

The Senator has called for a moratorium on new nuclear power plant construction at least until the Nuclear Regulatory Commission has complete tests of backup cooling systems in commercial reactors and until a decision has been reached on how to dispose of toxic nuclear wastes.

Senator Gravel also questioned the tax-exempt status of the AIF. The memorandum states that AIF will make "industry initiatives" in Washington "on behalf of the nuclear industry" in a "political battle."

He said, "The AIF and its members, who deal with the most hazardous of man's technologies, have a responsibility even greater than that of other industries to be open and honest" in their information policies.