

North Slope Natives file Beaufort Suit

The North Slope Borough will go to court to block the Beaufort Sea oil and gas lease sale, scheduled December 11 in Fairbanks.

Conrad Bagne, the borough's attorney said that the borough and the villages of Kaktovik and Nuiqsut will consolidate their actions in state and federal courts. Both state and federal officials will be defendants.

The lawyers will seek to cancel the sale or have the removal of tracts beyond the Barrier Islands. Challenges to the sale will be based on Coastal Zone Man-

agement laws, the Endangered Species Act, inadequacy of available information or preparation in making decisions to hold the sale, and the Interior Department's failure to protect the Native interests. Environmental groups are also considering filing suits.

This action almost comes almost a year to the day when the Borough, and the villages of Kaktovik, Nuiqsut, and Barrow were unsuccessful in seeking a court order to stop the drilling of an exploratory well by Exxon on Duck Island.