

# AFN PRESIDENT ROGER LANG EXPRESSES DISPLEASURE AT LUPC'S JOE JOSEPHSON

## Issue Is Easements Across Native Lands

Roger Lang, President of the Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc. has expressed extreme displeasure at the manner in which the Land Use Planning Commission and its State Co-chairman, Joe Josephson addressed the problems of easements across Native Lands.

Mr. Lang indicated that the decision made by the Land Use Planning Commission during the week of November 9th-13th on easement criteria can only be considered as a direct taking of Native lands.

Mr. Lang said, "There is no question in my mind that the shoreline easements designated by the Land Use Planning Commission for 'recreational' streams, lakes, and rivers are an attempt to undercut the deeding of fee-title land to Alaska Natives."

Mr. Lang went on to commend Commissioners, John Schaffer and Jim Hurley, members of the Land Use Planning Commission who supported the AFN stand on 'no easements to minor waterways'. Unfortunately, they were overruled by a vote of five to two by the remainder of the Commission.

Joe Josephson, State Co-chairman for the Land Use Planning Commission came in for particularly heavy criticism from Mr. Lang.

He said, "It is clear that Mr. Josephson was unwilling to listen to the testimony presented by Native groups and their representatives."

"Mr. Josephson had his mind made up on what types of ease-

ments should be made across Native lands, months ago, and has consistently held to the theory that easements to 'minor' streams lakes or rivers should be a major part of the easement criteria, even though there is no mention of these waterways and shoreline easements in the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act, or the Land Selection Regulations."

The Alaska Federation of Natives has been wroking for several months with the Regional Corporations in developing positions regarding easements across Native lands.

The Alaska Federation of Natives' position was endorsed by eleven of the twelve Regional Corporations, and limited easements to those necessary for transportation across Native land to public land, and periodic easements along major (Kuskokwim, Yukon, Lake Iliamna, etc.) waterways.

The Commission's recommendations for easements went far beyond the intent of the Act. The easement criteria developed by the Land Use Planning Commission was drawn primarily from an easement position developed by Trout Unlimited, which stressed a maximum number of easements, effecting the greatest amount of Native lands, villages, and the economic potential of these streams for Native use.

President Lang indicated that the Alaska Federation of Natives will be arguing against the Land Use Planning Commission decision to the Alaska Task Force sometime during December. The Land Use Planning Commission plans to present their recommendations to the Alaska Task Force in Washington.

Mr. Lang indicated that representatives from AFN and many of the Regional Corporations would be present in Washington when these discussions took place.

Mr. Lang said, "It is unfortunate that we continue to have to fight to retain rights guaranteed us by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act."

"It is equally unfortunate that people, who claimed to be friendly to the Native community, will not implement the Act, according to promulgated regulations, but are continually trying to take land back from Alaska Natives in one form or another."

"The Alaska Federation of Natives will continue to fight to see that the Alaska Natives rights are protected despite actions by the Land Use Planning Commission and others."