

Watchdog for Tundra—

Satellite Heat-Detecting

WASHINGTON—Existing satellite heat-detecting systems have been proposed to survey Alaska as a first step in patrolling the tundra later on against oil seepage disasters, according to U.S. Senator Mike Gravel.

Senator Gravel, in letters to Dr. Thomas O. Paine, NASA Administrator, Dr. Robert White, ESSA Administrator, urged that scientists examine the feasibility of incorporating conservation experiments in the Earth Resource Satellite program.

"If some of the heat-detection systems in existing satellites can be used now," Senator Gravel said, "bench mark tests could be conducted as a prelude to final definition of a permanent policing system."

Senator Gravel said the proposed pipeline from the North Slope to Valdez would run gen-

erally through virgin territory, and when completed be carrying heated oil. An undetected leak in the system, Senator Gravel said, could turn the tundra into a quagmire.

"Perhaps a sensitive enough satellite born heat detector could signal whenever the tundra is disturbed by heat," Senator Gravel said.