

# Concerns voiced about take-over

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The Alaska Federation of Natives and the Rural Alaska Community Action Program are concerned about the consequences of State of Alaska take-over of the marine mammal management in western Alaska.

Concern is such that AFN President Janie Leask is drafting a letter to Gov. Bill Sheffield asking that the state postpone an active take-over move until further thought has been given to the matter.

RURAL CAP also has voiced concern about the matter.

Concern is about the effect that action will have on the local subsistence needs of the

western Alaska villages which rely on the 10 species of marine mammals covered by the Marine Mammal Protection Act.

The state wants the management program back for a variety of reasons and Gov. Bill Sheffield already has budgeted \$1.2 million for running the program in the 1984 budget.

According to Danny Kelso, deputy commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game, state motives for starting the process of regaining control stem from the desire for the state to control its own destiny and the lack of any active federal marine mammal management program in the

state.

Kelso said the state has "begun the process" for seeking control. The steps that must be done to regain actual control include:

- \* Upgrading the state's law concerning wanton waste;
- \* Hold a meeting of the Guide Board to establish guidelines for guides for marine mammal hunts;
- \* Hold scientific hearings to establish levels to maintain the optimum sustainable population of each of the 10 species under consideration.

The state also must adhere to stipulations of the MMPA that say rural and local residents have first priority when

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# Marine mammal

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mammals are taken because of subsistence and cultural priority needs.

The entire process is lengthy and complicated, said Kelso, and probably will take until next year at best.

He said the comments coming in from AFN are part of that process and said that much more opportunity will be given for comments from villagers and other state residents.

Kelso stressed that the state is not committed to taking over marine mammal management control just because it

has taken the first step of asking for management. The public hearing process and further studies will be of paramount importance in the final take-over decision, he said.