

Regional Org. Waivers First Step for TAPS

The initial modification of the land freeze in Alaska this week brought no reaction from the Alaska Federation of Natives.

According to Willie Hensley, executive director of the AFN, the organization has pretty much left it up to the regional organizations comprising the federation to agree or disagree to a waiver.

The waiver was the first step toward granting TAPS a permit to construct its 800-mile pipeline from the North Slope to Valdez and came as the result of an order signed by Secretary of the Interior Walter J. Hickel.

The regional organizations, Hensley said, are the bodies claiming the land, and so the AFN left it to them to decide whatever they like.

If they felt that the construction of the pipeline would be harmful to them, then they could take whatever action they felt necessary, he explained.

If they felt that it would not be harmful and if they could make an agreement with the oil companies on labor and construction companies, then that is what they have done and will do.

The AFN knows the power of the oil companies and the need of the country for fuel, he added.

"Our impression was that fighting these companies would simply get the Alaskans who want the pipeline against us and would make it difficult for us to

push for an overall settlement of the land claims issue."

(Continued on page 6)

Waivers . . .

(Continued from page 1)

The State representative from Kotzebue said that he presently hated to see Alaska repeat the mistakes of industrialization and pollution made by other states.

"I kind of feel that the pipeline is an initial step in the beginning of the deterioration of the wilderness," he concluded.