



Show your support for 1991 bill

by Janie Leask

The first round of Congressional hearings on the 1991 amendments to ANCSA went well and AFN members who are tracking the legislation are optimistic that the amendments will be approved by Congress this year.

However, it's still important that you express your support for the amendments to members of Congress and others. While we all have been working on the 1991 issues for several years, many members of Congress only recently have seen the proposed legislation. They need to know it's important to us. As Sen. Frank Murkowski put it: "It's important to show your support... for that testimony will play a key role in whether or not the legislation passes."

While many hearings and workshops have been held throughout the state, more are scheduled next month. Members of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee are planning to hold hearings in Fairbanks May 24 and in Anchorage May 27. The times and places for those hearings are to be announced at a later date.

For those of you who cannot attend the hearings but would still like to express your views, written testimony may be sent to our Congressional delegation. Copies of the proposed

legislation are available from those offices. If you have questions on the legislation, please don't hesitate to call us. We would be happy to discuss the proposed legislation with you.

As you recall, the legislation is the result of resolutions passed during the AFN Special Convention held in March of 1985. The legislation addresses three major issues of 1991: the potential loss of control of the ANCSA corporations; the possibility of loss of Native lands; and the provisions excluding young Natives from participating in the settlement.

The proposed legislation is designed to create options which the corporations and shareholders can use to decide what works best for them.

Again I think it's important that you let Congress know that all Alaska Natives urge passage of this legislation. AFN staff and board members have been working on your behalf to let Congress know your sentiments. However, we cannot do it alone. It's important to let Congress know you favor passage of the legislation so we can retain ownership of the land — ownership which can only be retained through continued control of the Native corporations.

☐ *Janie Leask is president of the Alaska Federation of Natives.*