

# **Cook Inlet lease sale postponed**

Secretary of the Interior Cecil D. Andrus announced February 7 that he was canceling the sale of oil and gas leases in the Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) area of Alaska's Cook Inlet scheduled for February 23 in Anchorage. A decision will be made in 90 days as to whether to reschedule the sale during 1977, Secretary Andrus said.

The announcement came several days after fishermen, environmentalists and the Aleut village of English Bay filed suit to halt the sale.

Secretary Andrus said that he needs more time to examine the studies, comments and options that were available to his predecessor. He will then decide whether more work needs to be done before deciding whether the sale should proceed.

He emphasized that in making his decision to cancel the sale, he had not come to any opinion on the adequacy of any studies or other preparations conducted to date.

The Department announced the sale January 18, before Secretary Andrus took office. The sale proposal covered 120 tracts totaling about 683,182 acres.

The sale area is in the southern two-thirds of Cook Inlet between Kalgin Island on the north and the Barren Islands on the south. It covers a region about 60 miles long and 30 miles wide.