

# Stu Rothman Testifies At Anchorage Hearing

*(Editor's Note: Last week in Anchorage, Stu Rothman of Fairbanks testified in favor of the pipeline. In the process, he had things to say about the native element concerning the line. We are excerpting his statements about the natives from his testimony.*

"...Certain leaders of large Native groups in Alaska have stated unequivocally that their people would like to see no oil development.. I, personally, challenge their right to make that statement!

"Now, I am not against the native land claims, but let's face facts. When the colonists first came to the shores of America, they bartered and traded for their toe-hold in the new land. Then, when the United States of America was formed, so-called pioneers headed west and south and took the land from the Indians. Years later, the United States government realized and acknowledged the wrongs these pioneers did, and are attempting and have attempted in many cases to make restitution to the dispossessed Indians.

"This situation did not and does not exist in Alaska. The United States of America bought Alaska from Russia more than one hundred years ago.

"If anyone owes the Alaskan Natives anything for their land, maybe it is Russia. The United States paid for this land. The United States could say to the Native people, 'We bought your land from Russia. Go see them about getting paid for your land.' But the United States does not conduct business that way. Even if there is a question of whether the Alaskan Natives have a legal right to money under a land claims bill, the United States realizes that it is a moral obligation, and currently our Congress is in the process of outlining a just settlement. But this acknowledgement and acceptance of this debt should in no way give the Native people the idea that they can use these claims as a crowbar to wedge what they want into the works as a price for not impeding the development and progress of Alaska..."