

AFN hopes for passage this year

1991 legislation introduced in House, Senate

The Alaska congressional delegation announced today that identical bills to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA), had been introduced Thursday in the House of Representatives and the Senate. The introduction of the bills is the first step towards congressional consideration of proposals to change ANCSA to deal with the 1991 issue.

The House version of the 1991 bill, introduced by Congressman Don Young, was referred to the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, on which Young is the ranking Republican member. The Senate version, S. 2065, introduced by Senators Frank Murkowski and Ted Stevens, was referred to the Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources, of which Sen. Murkowski is a member.

"This bill is the product of two years of deliberation in the Alaska Native community," Young said. "I believe the consensus they have achieved provides us with a good starting point and will serve as a focus of attention on necessary changes to the settlement act."

"This legislation is important to all Alaskans and Americans," Young went on to say. "The Interior Com-

mittee will soon hold hearings on the bill. It is my hope that with the cooperation of my colleagues on the committee, and the strong support of interested parties, that we can move the amendments quickly through Congress."

The bill amends several sections of ANCSA. Among other things, it:

- *Authorizes Native corporations upon shareholder approval to issue new classes of stock under certain conditions. Such stock may be subject to alienability restrictions.*

- *Authorizes Native corporations upon shareholder approval to issue Native common stock to Natives born after December 18, 1971; Natives who have attained the age of 65; and Natives who were eligible for enrollment under ANCSA but were not enrolled. Such stock may be issued for no consideration or consideration determined by the corporation.*

- *Automatically extends alienability restrictions on Native common stock beyond 1991. Native corporation shareholders can vote to terminate such restrictions. Bristol Bay Native Corporation and village corporations*

within the Bristol Bay region can elect to follow a different procedure under which corporation shareholders must affirmatively vote to continue alienability restrictions.

- *Specifies that no provision of ANCSA enlarges, diminishes, or in any way affects the scope of the Native sovereignty question in Alaska.*

- *Extends protection for undeveloped Native corporation lands from taxation beyond 1991.*

- *Permits a Native corporation upon shareholder approval to convey all or some of its assets to a membership organization recognized under state or federal law for no consideration or consideration determined by the shareholders.*

"This legislation represents the beginning of the legislative process to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to address concerns raised by 1991," Sen. Murkowski noted. "It is a package of options from which the Native corporations can select to continue to manage their land and stock assets."

In a statement on the Senate floor, Sen. Stevens stated: "As a matter of

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1991 legislation

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basic fairness, Congress must respond to the concerns that Alaska Natives have expressed about the future of their land settlement in connection with the 1991 provisions of ANCSA. We must make sure that the federal government keeps the promises it made to the Natives in 1971. Resolving the problems of 1991 and ensuring the success of the Native land claims settlement is in the best interest of all Alaskans and all Americans."

Stevens further stated that the "bill is the starting point of the legislative process, not the end product. We plan to subject the bill to extremely close scrutiny in the hearing and markup process. We intend to listen closely to the comments of all individuals whose interests would be affected by the bill."

AFN President Janie Leask, commenting on the introduction of the bill,

said "We at the Alaska Federation of Natives are very pleased to see the introduction of amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act that the Natives of the state have worked so hard for. For the past three years Alaska Natives have been meeting and discussing possible amendments to the Act. The introduction of these amendments by the Alaska Congressional Delegation and Rep. Udall are the cumulative results of those efforts.

"This year AFN plans to continue working closely with the Alaska delegation in hopes the legislation will be approved this year."

The House Interior and Insular Affairs Committee held a hearing on 1991 issues in Anchorage last August. Hearings on the 1991 bill are currently being scheduled in Alaska.

Sen. Murkowski will be holding workshops on the bill in Hoonah at the Public High School Gymnasium from 12:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. on February 11 and in Barrow at the High School Auditorium from 1:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.