

Gov. Sheffield gives views on Subsistence

ANCHORAGE—The following is a transcript of Governor Sheffield's weekly Radio Report for Friday, August 23.

If you want to hunt and fish in Alaska just as you have in years past, please take the time to listen to this. I hope you'll listen, because the debate over our fish and game laws has strayed off the right trail, and I think I know just where it's heading.

Without question, we have a problem. Our fish and game laws are out of balance, and we need to set things straight. But if we're going to solve this problem, we've got to make sure we're all talking about the same issue.

The problem can be condensed into this simple progression:

- * We had a good system, of fish and game regulation.

- * The Supreme Court said we had to change it.

- * Then, I proposed to fix the problem by putting the regulations into law, so everyone could hunt as they have the past three years.

- * But the State Senate refused to take action.

- * So the boards of Fish and Game had to make emergency regulations to conform to the Supreme Court ruling.

- * And, right now, we've got a problem.

The problem is not with sub-

Our state Boards of Fish and Game have done a good job of protecting subsistence rights while fairly regulating other aspects of hunting and fishing. But last spring, the courts said we had a technical problem—the boards were dealing with regulations that didn't match our state subsistence law.

I introduced legislation designed to correct the problem. More important, my bill was designed

official responsible for managing most federal lands in Alaska. He'd like Alaska to work this out for itself, but the federal government will not hesitate to step in and enforce its subsistence law.

It only makes sense that we solve this problem ourselves, because I know we can manage our fish and game better than people sitting back in Washington D.C. But we've already lost one opportunity, and I don't know

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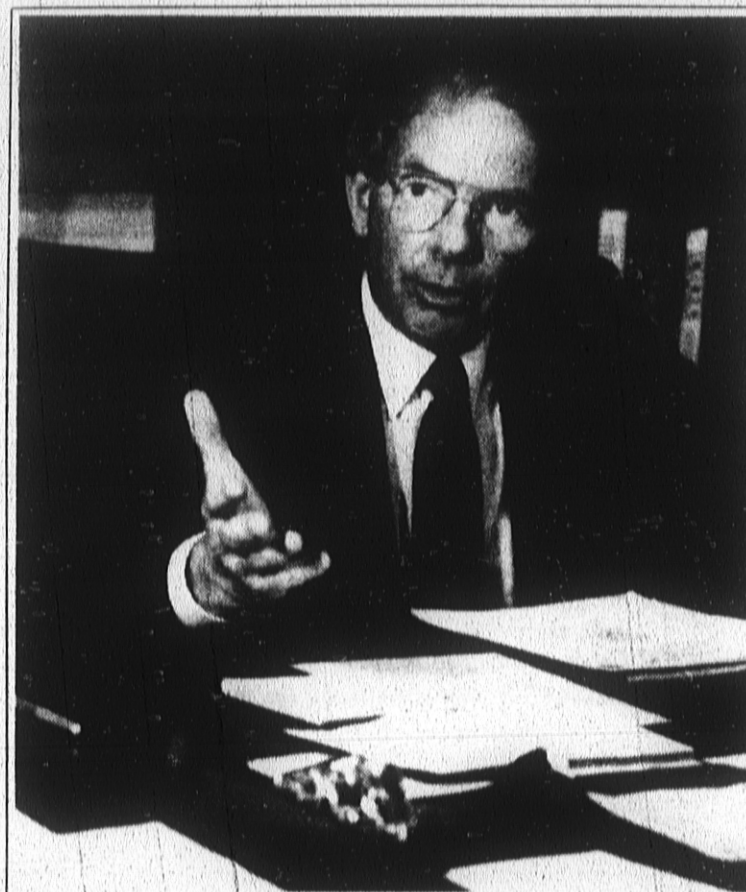
to allow most Alaskans to keep fishing and hunting just about like they'd always been doing. The House of Representatives agreed; they did some fine tuning on my bill, then passed it and sent it over to the Senate.

That's where things ground to a halt. The Senate took no action on the bill, and that's why things are so out of balance today. The reason is simple: Without passage of that bill, the Boards of Fish and Game were forced to write new regulations to protect subsistence.

These new regulations have angered many people, especially those in the urban areas who find

how many more we'll get.

That's why I'd like you to write or talk to the state Senator who represents you. Tell him or her that the bill I proposed and the House passed will get us out of this mess. And more important, it will bring back reasonable opportunities for all Alaskans to hunt and fish.



Gov. Bill Sheffield.

"Subsistence is an important part of the economy and the general lifestyle in many Alaskan communities."

sistence itself. I think most Alaskans agree that subsistence is an important part of the economy and the general lifestyle in many Alaska communities. That's why the Legislature passed a state subsistence law in 1978, and that's why Alaskans voted overwhelmingly to support our law in 1982. But there's one other fact about subsistence that can't be overlooked: It's mandated by federal law — and under that federal law, it's our obligation to protect subsistence.

themselves shut out of traditional hunting grounds. As an Alaskan who has hunted and fished over much of the state for the past 30 years, I share that frustration.

Some people are trying to turn that anger on the federal subsistence law. They're trying to tell you we can ignore the law and the federal government will look the other way.

Don't believe it, because I can tell you it's just not true. I talked again just this week with Bill Horn, the Department of Interior