

Sheffield urges drilling delay

Associated Press

Juneau — The state has asked the federal government to remove temporarily more than one-third of the waters from a proposed offshore oil and gas lease sale in the Beaufort Sea.

The state contends more time is needed to study the effects of industrial activity on wildlife and subsistence hunting.

"These waters off Kaktovik and Barrow are far too important for subsistence hunting and fishing to be opened to exploration or development without further information at this time," Gov. Bill Sheffield said Tuesday.

The request for at least a two-year deferral on 6 million acres was contained in comments the state submitted last week on a draft environ-

mental impact statement. The U.S. Department of the Interior is preparing the impact statement on the proposed June 1984 sale of 18 million acres in the Diapir Field off the North Slope.

"In general, the Diapir Field sale as proposed by the Interior Department is far too large for the state and local residents to offer comments in a meaningful way," Sheffield said. "This problem underscores the reason the state . . . is continuing its litigation over the entire federal outer continental shelf accelerated lease sale schedule."

Specifically, the state wants removed 35 percent of 3,350 blocks that are scheduled for lease by the federal government.

Such a delay, state officials said, would:

Allow the state to eval-

uate the blocks for possible lease in smaller sections.

Adequately study the effects of noise and other distur-

bances on subsistence hunting activities