

NANA land swap enhances "national mineral security"

Washington--Testimony of the land exchange between NANA Regional Corporation and the U.S. Department of Interior was heard today by Senator Frank Murkowski, who chaired the Senate hearing.

The proposed legislation, introduced by Murkowski, would allow a land exchange between the federal government and NANA, enabling the corporation to develop an access road to a mineral deposit.

The Alaska senator heard testimony in favor of the land swap from representatives of COMINCO Alaska, Inc., the National Parks and Conservation Association, the Alaska National Audubon Society and the NANA Regional Corporation.

"The land exchange would enhance our national mineral security," Murkowski said, in his opening statement. "It would be against our national self-interest to vote against the land exchange

while we are trying to enhance our own mineral security."

"The access road would also be built along the environmentally preferred route," he added. "Other alternatives have been studied and ruled out. A conclusion was then reached that a land exchange is necessary to allow the road to be built along the preferred route, across what is now the Cape Krusenstern National Monument."

According to Murkowski, the proposed land exchange has three major objectives. "First, it would increase the chances for NANA

to fulfill its economic provisions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act by constructing a mine which would be a major lead and zinc deposit, providing for the social and economic needs of NANA's shareholders."

"Second, it would be in the best interest of the public because the land exchange would organize the land ownership patterns of the Krusenstern National Monument, reducing private inholdings."

"Lastly, with the Red Dog mine enhancing our own mineral security, we would improve the balance of trade. Red Dog would

increase our recoverable reserves of zinc by more than 33 percent, from almost 25 million tons to almost 40 million tons of metal," he said.

"When in full production, the Red Dog will produce 300,000 tons of zinc per year, almost doubling the nation's annual production. Exports from the Red Dog mine are expected to total about \$250 million a year in current dollars. About one-third of the exports will go to Japan which would help to correct our staggering trade imbalance with that nation," Murkowski said.