

# Columnist opposes 1991 legislation

by Paul Swetzof

for the Tundra Times

Alaska Sens. Frank Murkowski and Ted Stevens have introduced a substitute bill to Senate Bill 1145 regarding amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

To begin with, Willie Kasayulie is correct when he urges the Senate Energy & Resources Committee to withhold consideration of any amendments to ANCSA until the hunting and fishing seasons are complete, in order that all of us will have the opportunity to study and comment on this bill.

Murkowski and Stevens have broken a promise they made to us that they would not support any bill which is not sovereignty neutral.

AFN has destroyed any credibility and trust they were working toward by supporting Alaska's two senators in their introduction of this bill. It's hard to express the betrayal I feel toward AFN for their support of this bill.

I suspect that this bill reflects the lobbying efforts of some of our corporate leaders and is now AFN's position. I wish AFN would help us gain the same rights as are enjoyed by Janie Leask's village of Metlakatla.

Having read and analyzed the bill it is obvious to me that it reflects the old Indian termination policies of 30 and 40 years ago. These policies were rejected years ago by the U.S. Congress and the conscience of the American people.

Murkowski and Stevens, with the help of AFN, are attempting to revive the old termination policy in Alaska. If this bill or something similar were to become law, it would foreclose the permanent protection of that portion of our land base which was meant to

---

*I urge everyone to immediately write to every member of the committee urging the above action.*

---

be granted to us under ANCSA.

It would also not allow for Alaska Natives to exercise their inherent rights of self-government within the context of the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934 and 1936. The secretary of the Department of Interior would be prohibited from accepting our lands in trust, thus foreclosing the protection of our lands which trust status provides.

The taxation and condemnation provision of SB 1145 could result in the loss of even our core village lands.

I have written to every senator on the Senate Energy & Resources Committee, with the notable exception of Frank Murkowski, in order to request a delay in consideration of the bill. I am asking that they not pass any bill out of the committee which does not afford permanent protection of our lands, our right to be self-governing and our subsistence resources.

I urge everyone to immediately write to every member of the committee urging the above actions.

I would additionally suggest that we not write to either Murkowski or Stevens since to do so would not affect their thinking.

Alaska senators do not have much clout in Congress, especially considering that both houses of Congress are democratically controlled, and Alaska's senators are Republican.

I believe it is much more effective to work with Outside senators and ignore Murkowski and Stevens. They have clearly demonstrated where their sympathies lie, and they're not with us.

The members of the Senate Energy & Resources Committee can be reached by addressing letters to them by name at: United States Senate, Senate Energy & Resources Committee, Washington, D.C. 20510. They are Sens. Dan Evans, Chie Hecht, James McClure, Mark Hatfield, Lowell Weicker, Malcolm Wallop, Don Nickles, Dale Bumpers, Wendel Ford, J. Bennett Johnston, Howard Metzenbaum, John Melcher, Bill Bradley, Jeff Bingaman, Timothy Wirth, Wyche Fowler, Kent Conrad and Pete Domenici.