

Arguments heard in Beaufort Sea lease sale suit in Barrow

Fairbanks Superior Court Justice Jay Hodges heard arguments Tuesday in Barrow in lawsuits challenging Beaufort Sea oil and gas leases. The suits were brought by arctic slope communities, the North Slope Borough and Jacob Adams, Eben Hopson and Archie K. Brower.

Attorneys for the north slope Natives, the State, the oil industry and the United States presented legal arguments

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● lease sale arguments heard

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in the summary judgement hearing. Judge Hodges recessed the court after each presentation to allow Sadie Neakok to explain the proceedings in Inupiaq to the packed courtroom.

Alaska Legal Service attorneys and Washington, D.C. attorney Bruce Terris represented the plaintiffs in the case. They presented legal papers contending the Beaufort Sea sale was in violation of the Alaska Lands Act, the Alaska Coastal Management Act, the Alaska Open Meetings Act, the Alaska Dangerous Species Act, the Federal

Marine Mammal Protection Act and the Federal Endangered Species Act.

The judge asked that additional legal papers be presented to the court by the attorneys by May 16. A decision in the case is not expected before late May. Whatever decision is reached, an appeal to the Alaska Supreme Court is likely.

Meanwhile, in Federal court, a hearing is scheduled before the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C. for May 15. The hearing concerns three federal lawsuits challenging the Beaufort Sea sale.