

Fears Suits Arising from Edwardson V Morton Decision

Governor Jay Hammond has written to President Gerald Ford seeking a "stronger and more unified Administration position" while Congress considers legislation to finalize the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Hammond discussed with President Ford during their meeting on September 2, his concern about the Edwardson v. Morton decision in Federal District Court which, if allowed to stand, will have far reaching consequences for all Alaskans.

Hammond has called this a "tragic decision going far beyond dollars and lawsuits."

In his letter to Ford, the Governor said, "the crucial need now is for a legislative solution in the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act amendments now active in Congress. Thus far, one of the major obstacles to strong legislation has been the supportive but relatively weak positions taken by the Departments of Justice and Interior. My hope in raising the issue with you was that the increased understanding of the seriousness of this issue would result in a stronger and more unified Administration position."

Hammond also wrote the President, "A number of legislative alternatives are available, but key factors include a clear statement of the original intent of Congress to fully extinguish all claims of the Edwardson nature and a mechanism to at least prevent all future suits based on similar claims in Alaska."

In his newspaper column just released today, Hammond wrote, "As Governor, I see the implications of this decision as including years of litigation, and the devotion of much of the State's human and financial resources to the task of working on thousands of lawsuits. This diversion of the energies of the State at a time so crucial in its history simply cannot be tolerated."


In addition, the Governor wrote that greater than human and monetary costs will be social costs. "...if it stands, the Edwardson decision will result in years of bitter and divisive litigation."

Hammond wrote to President Ford that Commissioner of

Natural Resources Guy Martin would be pleased to work with the White House staff on details of legislation. Previously the Governor had directed Martin and Attorney General Av Gross to seek congressional relief.

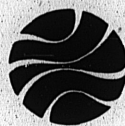
Accordingly, in May, Commissioner Martin testified in Washington expressing the Administration's concerns and urging remedial Congressional action.

This State's testimony was the first position taken by Alaskan governmental officials on this issue and was followed shortly by the introduction of an amendment to resolve the issue by Senator Ted Stevens.



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AIA Appoints Jean Robert Vice President

FAIRBANKS, AK. — Jean M. Robert has been appointed Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Alaska International Air, Inc.

The appointment follows ten years of service with the all cargo airline. Serving as Vice President of Operations since May 1974, Robert has also served as Chief Pilot and Senior Flight Officer.

According to AIA President, George Kamats, "Robert's broad experience in airline operations worldwide provides an invaluable asset to AIA's current needs and future plans."

An eleven year resident of Alaska, Jean, his wife Carla and two children enjoy Fairbanks as their home.

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