

If subsistence unaffected —

NANA Region Board drops its opposition to mining

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NANA Regional Corporation is dropping an anti-mining policy of six years' standing. The NANA board of directors voted recently (May 16) at a meeting to Kotzebue to go on record as supporting mining within the NANA region, with certain limitations and one exception. According to NANA president,

John Schaeffer, the new policy will support mining in the region "as long as we can make it compatible with our subsistence lifestyle and other economic and social norms that our people enjoy."

The lone exception to the pro-mining policy is uranium. Because the board considers the cancer hazards associated with uranium mining to have been in-

adequately controlled elsewhere, NANA remains opposed to any uranium mining within the region as well as to such mining outside the region if it might produce detrimental effects within the region.

The board's shift on the mining issue came in response to a favorable vote on the question by shareholders at the annual meet-

ing held last March in Ambler. When the question was originally put to them six years ago, the shareholders voted against mining in the region in order to protect subsistence values.

The board also voted to have NANA join in a lawsuit concerning section 7(j) of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. Section 7(j) requires re-

gional corporations to share with village corporations federal land claim monies. The lawsuit in question contends that regional corporations must also share their profits with village corporations, and NANA disagrees. "We feel that's the wrong interpretation and it would have a detrimental effect on our corporation so we are going to join in the suit," Schaeffer said.