

**Perhaps 10,000 by Christmas—**

# **4,000 Signers Support AFN**

ANCHORAGE—Petitions signed by over 4,000 Alaskans supporting the Alaska Federation of Natives land claim proposal will be presented to Senators Stevens and Gravel and Congressman Pollock in Washington Friday.

Eben Hopson, executive director of the Arctic Slope Native Association, and Phillip Guy, Alaska Village Council Presidents representative, have left for Washington to present the petitions and join the AFN team in the nation's capital.

The petition says: "We, the undersigned citizens of Alaska, request that Senators Ted Stevens and Mike Gravel, and Representative Howard W. Pollock support us in obtaining a just settlement of our land claims by promoting the Alaska Federation of

Natives' position."

The petitions have circulated in urban and rural areas over the past three weeks.

"The Federation does not believe in influencing legislation by petition when such a clear moral and legal issue is at stake," said Jim Thomas, AFN Public Relations Director. "But the efforts of some Alaskan businessmen of limited vision to cloud the issues gave us no choice but to take our case to the people."

The AFN indicated that the 4,000 plus names represented only the first group of petitions received.

"At the rate we're going, I'll be surprised if we don't pass 10,000 by Christmas," said Thomas.

The AFN reported that the

petition campaign was strictly a citizens' effort, with supporters of a generous and fair land claims settlement taking the petitions to their friends and on through a community.

"We don't have the funds to have people working full time on getting signatures or to run daily newspaper ads throughout the state," Thomas said.

"Under these circumstances, the overwhelming favorable response to our citizens' effort makes this all the more impressive."

AFN Public Relations said any Alaskans wishing to sign the petition should write to AFN, 1675 C Street, Anchorage.

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