

Stamp Amendment-

Use Food Stamps for Ammunition

Senator Ted Stevens has written a letter to Senator Carl Curtis, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, urging the committee to adopt his amendment to the Food Stamp Act of 1964.

Wednesday the Committee turned down the amendment on the opposition of pro-gun control Senators.

Basically, Stevens' amendment would allow Alaskan Natives, or those who have adopted the Native subsistence way of life, to purchase ammunition with food stamps and ease the requirements for eligibility to allow more persons to purchase the stamps.

Stevens introduced similar amendments in both the 91st and the 92nd Congress.

The Department of Agriculture had opposed the purchase of "non-food items such as ammunition" with food stamps.

In answering this argument, Stevens stated in his letter that "Residents of coastal and rural Alaska have a physiological, psychological and cultural dependence on local animals for subsistence . . . they waste nothing."

"The harsh environment, subsistence economy and cultural background require the utilization of every scrap of animal hide, meat, bone and sinew," the Senator continued.

"Alaskan Natives cannot buy this meat. The stores are small and stock only a few items. Beef, pork and chicken are almost never available, and when they are they are prohibitively expensive."

Stevens emphasized, "If our purpose is to give poor Alaskans food with the food stamps, the best way we can do this is to permit them to buy ammunition with food stamps so they can hunt for subsistence."

Stevens reminded the committee that during hearings on the Marine Mammals Protection

Act special consideration was given to Alaskan Natives.

"Such a special attention to be paid again," said the Senator. "We have such a unique situation in Alaska, with the numbers of both Natives and non-Natives who depend on the land and the ocean for the basic existence and comforts."

Stevens emphasized that his amendment would apply only to Alaska where such pressing and unusual needs are present.