

# Mike Urges Secretary of Labor to Release Alaska Plan Funds

WASHINGTON, D. C. — Senator Mike Gravel has urged the Secretary of Labor to release funds for the Alaska Plan, a program to train members of minority groups in order that equal employment policies can be implemented.

In a letter made public by his Washington office, Senator Gravel noted that President Nixon had endorsed the strengthening of current programs rather than the creation of new programs to stimulate equal job opportuni-

ties.

The Senator pointed out to James Hodgson, Secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor, that current programs cannot be strengthened without the funding that has already been approved for them.

According to the Alaskan Democrat, the Nixon Administration has held up funds for equal employment programs throughout the Nation. Until those funds are released, the Alaska Plan, and similar plans in

other states, are at a virtual standstill.

Senator Gravel said that the need for funding the Alaska Plan is "critical." He added that the Plan "is only worthless rhetoric unless the funds are there to support it."

According to Senator Gravel, business and labor groups in the State have developed goals for equal employment in Alaska. The funds are needed so that the goals can be reached. Without the funds, a burden is placed

on all elements of the Alaska economy.

"The businesses need to hire minority workers for contract compliance, but there are not enough trained individuals available," Senator Gravel said.

"Labor groups would like to have the composition of their membership in line with that of the general population, but this is impossible without trained minority group members. And, most important, lack of training thwarts the economic advance-

ment of minority group members.

"This is especially critical in Alaska. Federal contract compliance can be a problem for businessmen when adequately trained workers are not available.

"It is a problem for Alaskans who will possibly lose out on the employment opportunities that will open up with construction of the Alaska pipeline," he said.