

Gov. Denies Dereliction In Plans for Housing

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This letter was personally dictated over the telephone from Juneau by Governor Walter J. Hickel to the Tundra Times, just before deadline. An earlier copy, sent through the mail, failed to arrive.)

June 6, 1967

Honorable E. L. (Bob) Bartlett
U.S. Senate
Room 248, Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C.

Dear Bob:

In answer to your letter regarding the \$1 million for native housing recently deleted in the U.S. House of Representatives, I feel that I must take exception to the suggestion that my administration has been derelict in any way in preparing a housing program to support requests for these funds.

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Denies Dereliction . . .

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I would specifically call your attention to the fact that there was no state legislation authorizing the Governor to prepare a state housing program for Alaskan residents in rural areas until we submitted what eventually became Senate Bill 182 (Chapter 93, SLA, 1967) in the last session. The effective date for this legislation was April 20, 1967.

However, on the assumption that this measure would pass we began several months ago a review through the ASHA and through departments of my office of some of the problems that we would face in the development of a comprehensive Native housing program.

At the latest step in this administration's commitment to better housing for our Native population, I created a native housing task force under the authority of the Rural Affairs Commission created by the last legislative session.

On May 25 and 26, a dozen members of my administration met with the distinguished Native leaders on this task force and discussed the problems of developing a useful program that would fit the needs of the native villages.

The current schedule calls for a draft of the program discussed at that meeting to be presented for my review on June 19 and 20.

I have written to Robert C. Weaver, Secretary, Department of Housing and Urban Development, suggesting that representatives from my office would be available to review this program with him and members of his staff in Washington on June 22 and 23.

I feel that it would be most helpful if you, Senator Gruening, and Congressman Pollock could be present at this meeting.

We would then have sufficient time to put together a final program for the July 10 Senate hearings on the Native housing appropriation.

With warm personal regards,

Sincerely yours,
Walter J. Hickel
Governor

cc: Senator Gruening
Representative Pollock
Edward Crittenden, ASHA