

Native leaders tackle 1991



AFN 1991 Steering Committee members discussed the issue Thursday. Shown from left are Nelson Angapak, Ralph Ehaska, Gordon Pullar, Ed Thomas and Mitch Demientieff.

photo by M.A. Klusber

by A.J. McClanahan

Tundra Times publisher

Sens. Frank Murkowski and Ted Stevens last week introduced 1991 legislation in the Senate to amend the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, and Native leaders say

they are disappointed in the bill.

The bill differs from legislation passed earlier this year by the House and is similar to the Senate bill rejected by Alaska Natives last year.

"AFN is disappointed that the senators have again submitted a bill

that was defeated last year," said Janie Leask, AFN president. "We had hoped there would be some major changes to it."

The AFN Board of Directors met to discuss the issue Friday, follow-

(Continued on Page Eight)

• Bill called disappointing

(Continued from Page One)

ing a meeting of the federation's 1991 Steering Committee Thursday.

Leask said the board outlined components of the AFN testimony to be presented in Washington, D.C., May 19 at the 1991 hearing.

She said the board also decided to request that senators introduce a 1991 bill drafted jointly by AFN and the Alaska Native Coalition, so that the Senate, House and AFN-ANC bills could all three be discussed May 19.

Among the key sticking points in this year's Senate bill are provisions that call for:

- Native regional corporations to vote in favor of continuing restrictions on the sale of corporation stock beyond 1991 — a vote on "opting in" to continue the restrictions.

- Mandatory dissenters' rights, which would require corporations to pay off shareholders who wanted to sell their stock. Leask said such a provision could have "devastating effects" on some corporations if even a small percentage of shareholders insisted on selling their stock.

AFN has backed language that calls for a vote only if corporations want to vote against continued restrictions — a vote on "opting out" of restrictions.

The Senate bill calls for automatically lifting the stock sale restrictions for regional corporations with a vote to "opt in" if the regions want to preserve Native ownership of the stock. It calls for automatically continuing the restrictions for village corporations, unless they vote to "opt out."

Murkowski said in a prepared statement that the rationale behind treating regional and village corporations differently was because it "balances the need to protect in-

dividual shareholder's rights to choose whether the stock should be restricted and the need to provide additional protection to village corporations."

"The opt-in/opt-out issue is one of two primary ones that need to be resolved as the legislative process continues, and it is my hope that a consensus can be reached," he said.