

Gravel Asks Satellite Educ. TV for Natives

Senator Mike Gravel has requested the Senate Subcommittee on Indian Education, chaired by Senator Edward Kennedy, to recommend a satellite communications system for educationally disenfranchised natives in Alaskan villages.

In a letter addressed to Kennedy, Sen. Gravel said he had requested Robert H. Finch, Secretary of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, for a report on the use of satellites in health and educational plans for Alaska.

Gravel said that the Kennedy Subcommittee could be "instrumental in assisting the program."

Sen. Gravel put the spotlight on the Lister Hill National Center of Biomedical Communications (NCBC), which could provide rural Alaska doctors with split-second access to computerized medical data memory banks now only available at limited locations in the United States.

Sen. Gravel said, "Alaska's doctors could get immediate therapeutic or diagnostic information on demand instead of through the mail, or even telephone exchanges, where or when available in Alaska."

In addition the NCBC, which administratively is attached to the National Library of Medicine, can serve as a framework for national medical refresher

training and education," Sen. Gravel said.

At the time enabling legislation was announced, NCBC said it was considering satellite communications as well as established terrestrial networks.

"The United States is planning to make an experimental satellite available to India for

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SATELLITE TV

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national educational television," Gravel said. "Investment amounts indicate that the annual investment per pupil to bring educational television to every classroom in Alaska would be less than a taxi ride across Washington," he concluded.

Sen. Gravel also released a letter to NASA's administrator, Dr. Thomas O. Paine, in which the Senator requested evaluation of investment figures for various options in the India Program.