

Reagan signs Red Dog land exchange bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Alaska Sen. Frank Murkowski today announced that President Reagan has signed into law the land exchanged between NANA regional corporation and the National Park Service.

While the federal government has approved the land exchange, residents of the North Slope Borough rejected a proposal which would have given NANA 433,000 acres to form another borough. In an October 2 borough election the residents rejected the plan by a vote of 568 to 409.

The legislation, sponsored by Murkowski, allows for the development of the largest known zinc deposit in the United States and significant amount of lead, gold, and silver in the Red Dog Mine in Northwest Alaska.

"Now that the President has signed this land exchange into law, we can move ahead with the construction of this project," Murkowski said. "When in full operation, the project will provide some 400 permanent jobs in an area that has an unemployment rate of between 60 to 70 percent.

"This is a much needed job opportunity for an economically depressed region of our state.

The legislation provides NANA with a corridor to build an access road from the Red Dog Mine to a port site located in the

Northwest corridor of the Cape Krusenstern National Monument.

"Not only will this mineral development significantly improve the area's employment, but it will also allow NANA to provide for the social and economic needs of its shareholders," Murkowski said.

Sen. Ted Stevens said, "This legislation marks the start of a new chapter in the story of Alaska lands. Approval of the exchange was supported by major environmental groups, including the Audubon Society. The result is a law that will benefit not only the people of NANA, but people throughout the rest of Alaska as well."

"The Red Dog Mine is key to the continued diversification of the Alaskan economy," Congressman Don Young said. "The mine will provide much needed jobs in Northwest Alaska, and will serve as an important source of lead and zinc for many years to come. I look forward to joining representatives of NANA and Cominco in celebrating the first shipload of Red Dog ore."