

State subsistence bill makes rounds

BY NANCY HARVEY

The Special Committee on Subsistence voted a do-pass recommendation Monday on a comprehensive "omnibus" bill consolidating subsistence related legislation currently before the State Legislature.

House Bill 960, entitled "An Act Relating to Fish and Game Management" states there is a need to develop a statewide policy on the utilization, development and conservation of fish and game resources, to recognize those resources are not inexhaustible and that priorities must be established among beneficial users. The bill says that subsistence use shall be the priority use of the resources.

Rep. Nels Anderson (D-Dillingham), who chairs the special committee, termed the bill a "clear and specific means for the state to come to grips with the subsistence issue." Anderson said the bill was the result of nine months of work by the subsistence committee, which held hearings last fall in 12 towns and villages, and last month completed four days of teleconference hearings on the pending legislation.

The comprehensive bill combines a number of proposals, bills and suggestions that surfaced during the lengthy hearing process, including:

- Establishment of a division of subsistence within the current structure of the Department of Fish and Game;
- Creation of a permanent committee on subsistence in existence until 1984;
- Amendments to the 1975 subsistence hunting zone legislation which has never been implemented;
- Repeal of current statutes prohibiting barter of subsistence caught fish and game; and
- Prioritization of subsistence as a priority use of resources.

Commenting on the position of the State Administration regarding the issue of subsistence, Anderson said, "The governor has stated on numerous occasions he's looking for the legislature to provide input on the subsistence issue.

"My committee has come up with a comprehensive and well thought-out plan and I look to the governor for support of this plan," Anderson said.

The committee also approved a committee substitute for H.B. 674 to regionalize fish and game regulatory authority. The bill calls for the creation of seven region-

● *State subsistence bill gets House action*

al boards of fisheries and seven boards of game. Each board would have regulatory authority over game and fish within its jurisdictional area. One member from each board would hold membership on either a statewide fisheries or game management council and the statewide council would oversee the action of the regional council.

Also under the new regionalization program, the commissioner of Fish and Game would have the power

to challenge any regulation which he considered to be biologically unsound.

According to Anderson, 64 percent of those testifying at the statewide teleconference hearing favored the regionalization concept, although many supported the idea of a statewide coordinating council.

Anderson said he feels confident the committee substitute adequately provides for concerns expressed during the hearing.

The bills were referred to the House Resources Committee, chaired by Rep. Al Osterback (D-Sand Point) where they were considered Tuesday.

Members of the subsistence committee in addition to Anderson include: Rep. William Akers (R-Chuloonawick); Rep. Sam Cotten (D-Eagle River); Rep. Joe Hayes (R-Anchorage); Rep. Steve Cowper (D-Fairbanks); Rep. Al Nakak (D-Nome); Rep. Leo Schaeffer (D-Kotzebue), and Rep. Phillip Guy (D-Kwethluk).