

*Ask Reconsideration on Denial—*

# Senators Seek Land Use Fund

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Alaska's two Senators, Mike Gravel (D) and Ted Stevens (R), have joined forces to urge reconsideration of the House Subcommittee on Supplemental Requests' denial of a \$550,000 request by the Interior Department for a land-use plan in Northern Alaska.

In a joint letter to the Chairman of the Senate's corresponding subcommittee, Senator Robert C. Byrd (D-West Virginia), Alaska's Senatorial team pointed out that the study constitutes an area almost twice the size of the State of California and that, of this area, 98 per cent is under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior.

Pointing out that the Depart-

ment extended the Alaska land freeze for an additional six months to allow Congress to resolve the Native Claims issue, Senators Gravel and Stevens said, "it is very important that the land-use study be initiated as soon as possible."

"The overall objective of the study is to provide a mechanism to amicably resolve the future competing claims for the use of this large land mass from Native, environmental, industrial and state users," they said.

"It is most important that these competing claims be resolved by a group meeting together rather than through open conflict that would exist without a plan or a mechanism to resolve them."

The two Senators declared it was their "strong hope that the Senate will see the wisdom in replacing the funds of this important land plan and thus allow the Department of the Interior to initiate the study and the Advisory Board early during 1971.

"Without this type of planning," they warned, "the proposal to build the trans-Alaska pipeline may be overwhelmed by opposition from the very people who will be involved in the formation of the land-use plan if it is initiated now.

"Their participation at this time is essential to orderly development of Alaska's resources," the Senators concluded.