

Kito Asks for Impact Statement from Interior

FAIRBANKS — Executive director Sam Kito Jr. of Doyon, Limited has asked the Interior Department to produce an overall impact statement covering Alaska lands withdrawn by Interior Secretary Rogers C.B. Morton.

Proposed methods of determining and implementing what is "good" for Alaska and the nation range from the ludicrous to the sublime, Kito said recently, in response to studies of environmental impact on Interior lands withdrawn for federal management.

Doyon has reviewed in depth all of the draft environmental impact statements relating to the so-called "four systems" land withdrawals in our region and finds that the corporation can neither fully endorse or reject any of them, Kito said.

"Alaska is changing. The lifestyle of the Native people is changing, and national priorities are changing," he said. "We view the existing statements as an excellent base for determining goals and objectives at all levels.

"The (draft) environmental impact statements are a first step in that direction," he said.

But Kito added that he could not "imagine a total decision being made on the basis of 28 fragmented studies. We need one environmental impact statement considering the over-all and combined effect of the 28. No one has addressed that question as yet. We are asking Interior to do so," he said.

In a letter earlier in June to Theodore R. Swem, chairman of the Alaska Planning Group within the Interior Department, Kito commented on Interior's encouragement of competition between four federal systems to justify why they should manage the lands in question.

"Intentionally or otherwise, each of the 'four systems' was encouraged to compete for and justify, in any way they could,

why they should be allowed to manage a given area," Kito said.

"Bureaucratic objectivity is questionable regardless of the stated goals and objectives. Assuming the areas are to be administered as proposed, over 200 million acres of the nation's most valued lands, as well as a high percentage of Alaska's coastal areas, will be withdrawn

and placed under varying restrictions, of which the total effect has yet to be considered.

"We view the proposals as a first step toward needed land use planning; it seems prudent, however, to now consider the over-all impact (social and economic) to the state and the nation as a whole," he said.