

## By Alyeska pipeline—

## Design change on Gulkana

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA, February 5, 1976.

The U.S. Department of the Interior's Alaska Pipeline Office announced today their intention to approve a design change recently requested by Alyeska Pipeline Service Company involving the Trans-Alaska Pipeline crossing of the Gulkana River approximately one mile northwest of Sourdough, Alaska.

The decision to approve the proposed change was made after careful consideration of the reasons outlined in the request and the environmental consequences expected to result from the river crossing.

Originally, Alyeska proposed to cross under the river with the forty-eight inch oil pipeline. Because of local geotechnical considerations, the pipe would have to be closely paralleled by six-inch lines containing refrigerated brine solution.

After extensive studies, it was concluded that this method, while technically feasible and approved by the Alaska Pipeline Office, was impractical from a construction standpoint.

Further, the relatively unpredictable nature of the river channel at that location poses questions about problems that could develop during operation of the pipeline system.

Alyeska submitted a design change request to Federal and State monitoring offices several weeks ago, proposing to cross the river approximately one mile downstream from the original crossing site.

The design proposes construction of a 400-foot long tied-arch bridge to support the oil pipeline some twenty feet above the mean high water level of the river. The bridge crossing would essentially eliminate the need for in-stream work during construction.

In contrast with the special buried mode originally planned, the recent proposal offers considerably less likelihood of detrimental impact on the river's acclaimed fisheries resource, since the natural river bottom will remain untouched and in its original state.

The bridge also offers much greater opportunity for visual leak detection and consequently less response and repair time in

the event of a rupture.

Reroute of the pipeline necessitated by relocation of the crossing site will not significantly change the big game animal crossings north of the river. Special refrigerated burial of the pipeline will still be utilized to allow free passage by the Nelchima caribou herd.

The potential of the Gulkana River as a wild, scenic, or recreational river was addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement for the Trans-Alaska Pipeline and was considered during review of the two river crossing design proposals.

Both pipeline river crossings would intersect the Gulkana at a location where shoreline development existed prior to pipeline construction.

Neither the buried crossing on the old alignment nor the elevated crossing on the new proposal would preclude designation of this stretch of the Gulkana River as a "scenic river area," since the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, Section 2 defines "scenic river areas" as "those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by road."

Published guidelines, which define minimum criteria for classification and management of rivers proposed for inclusion in the national system, permit bridges within the "scenic classification."

After consulting with both the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, the Alaska Pipeline Office has forwarded comments to the U.S. Coast Guard in Juneau recommending issuance of the permit required for bridge construction.

## "Sense of the House"—

## Indian health

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A "sense of the House" resolution asking for disapproval of President Ford's proposed deferral of budget authority for Indian health facilities was introduced today by Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska).

When introducing the resolution (identical to a resolution introduced in the Senate yesterday by Alaska Sens. Ted Stevens and Mike Gravel) Young told his colleagues:

"I am greatly concerned that the President's impoundment of funds for the construction of a native hospital in Bethel, Alaska, would seriously delay the construction of this much-needed facility for native Alaskans in this remote community."

Young added that he believed the impoundment of the Bethel Hospital funds "would leave these people without adequate health facilities...." and asked his colleagues to support his objections of President Ford's proposed deferral of budget authority.

In his statement before the House, Young reminded his colleagues that the House Subcommittee on Indian Affairs and the full Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs would hold hearings on the

proposed deferrals on Feb. 20th and 27th, respectively.

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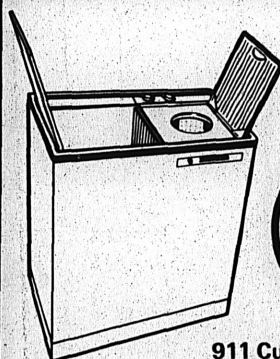
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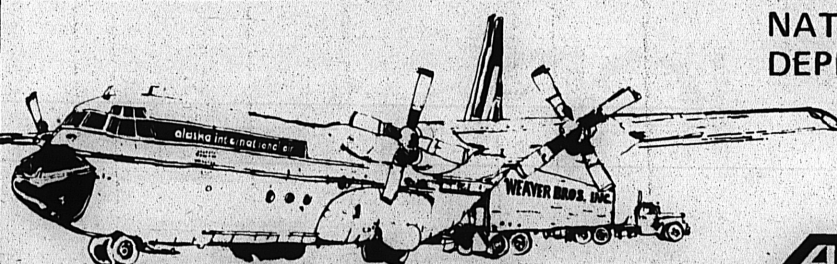
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