

Senate approves Interior Dept jurisdiction over Pet. 4

WASHINGTON The Secretary of Interior will take over jurisdiction of Alaska's Petroleum Reserve No. 4 on June 1, 1977 under terms of a bill given voice vote approval by the Senate recently. The House is expected to vote on the compromise bill soon and sent it to the President for his signature.

The bill provides for transfer of the 37,000 square mile reserve, capping the North Slope, from the Department of the Navy to the Interior Department.

The Interior Secretary will assume all responsibilities for any activities related to the protection of environmental, fish and wildlife, and historical or scenic values, as soon as the bill is enacted into law. He could begin immediately to promulgate any rules and regulations he deems necessary for protection of these values within the reserve.

When the actual transfer is effective, the reserve will be redesignated the "National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska." The legislation directs that a task force study the "best uses for the lands contained in the reserve, taking into consideration, the Natives who live or depend upon such lands, the scenic, historical, recreational, fish and wildlife, and wilderness values, mineral potential and other values of such lands."

The task force will be composed of representatives from the government of Alaska, the Arctic Slope Native community and federal agencies involved, including, but not limited to, the Bureau of Land Management, the Fish and Wildlife Service, the Geological Survey and the Bureau of Mines.

The Interior secretary will be required to submit a report, with any concurring or dissenting view, to Congress within three years after enactment of the bill.

Congress must authorize any development and production of petroleum from the reserve and also decide on the method for any future production.

Sen. Mike Gravel, D-Alaska, has been pushing for legislation to transfer Pet. 4 to the Interior Department since 1973. He maintained that the "Navy should run the nation's ships and the Interior Department should manage the nation's lands."

The Navy secretary will continue his ongoing petroleum exploration program within the reserve until the transfer, but is directed in the legislation to "cooperate fully" with the Interior secretary to facilitate the transfer.

The Navy currently has a contract with Husky Oil Co. to continue an exploratory program to provide an engineering assessment and evaluation of the petroleum potential of the reserve.

The Navy is also authorized to develop and continue operation of the South Barrow gas field, or such other fields as may

be necessary, to supply gas at reasonable and equitable rates to the Native villages of Barrow and other communities and installations at or near Point Barrow. The Interior secretary will continue to supply the gas

after the transfer.

The Interior secretary is authorized to provide impact funds if "there is an immediate and substantial increase in the need for municipal services and facilities in communities located

on or near the reserve as a direct result of the exploration and studies activities." This provision will be carried out through existing federal agencies and programs.

Water contamination reported at Prospect Creek

ANCHORAGE—Contamination of two water wells, apparently resulting from a recent oil spill, has been reported at Prospect Creek construction camp for the trans-Alaska pipeline project. The camp is located about 80 miles north of the Yukon River.

Use of the two wells was discontinued after an inspection that was prompted by the odor of oil in the water on March 19. Last Jan. 28, an estimated 40,000 gallons of diesel fuel were reported to have leaked

into a gravel base pad when a buried pipe ruptured.

Potable water is being hauled in trucks from Pump Station 5, two miles north of Prospect Creek camp. The camp's 25,000-gallon water storage tanks were drained into an approved diked area, and the tanks were cleaned and refilled with water from Pump Station 5.

Permission has been granted from the Department of Environmental Conservation to obtain drinking water from the Jem River, and pumping

equipment is being installed.

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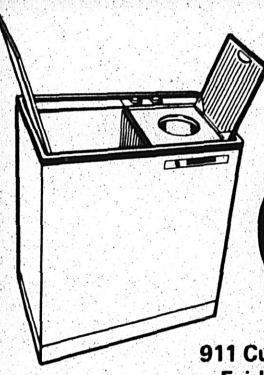
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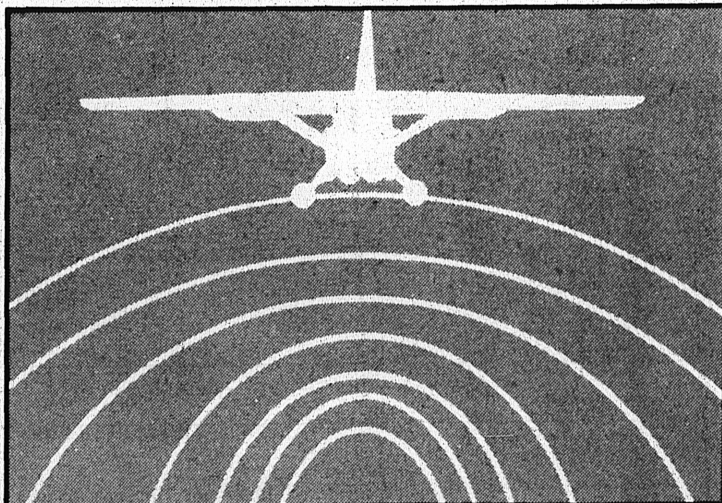
Blasting hazards along pipeline right-of-way.

Blasting along many portions of the trans-Alaska pipeline presents severe hazards to low-flying aircraft. In particular, low level flights through the mountain passes or across the Valdez terminal site should be avoided, since these are areas where heavy blasting activity is scheduled. To avoid possible flying debris, pilots should maintain a minimum altitude of 1,500 feet above ground level, or a lateral distance of one mile from the right of way.

For specific blasting information, pilots may contact Alyeska Advisory Stations, on 122.9 MHz, or an FAA flight service station.

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