

HB

452

Rural Alaska Community Action Program, Inc.

January 12, 1978

*Deauthorized
Just Home
Board*

The Honorable Don Young
United States House of Representatives
1210 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Young:

We noted with interest your proposal to the Legislature, presented last Monday, that a General Fund appropriation of \$5 to \$10 million finance a massive lobbying effort against the passage of HR 39. We believe such an effort, at this time, would be unwise.

At a time when the credibility of Alaska is at a low ebb in Congress, primarily due to the generally uninformed rhetoric of various groups and individuals who purportedly represent an "Alaskan position" on d-2 (generally) and HR 39 (specifically), a lobbying effort such as has been proposed would probably be interpreted as a waste of money (from a state which constantly tries to extract more money from the federal coffers). As well, it would constitute an admission that the State has been reduced to blind advocacy in opposition to one proposal without a responsibly-developed alternative. Also, it would be an insult to the many Alaskans who support all, or at least part of, the concepts embodied in the Sub-Committee print (of HR 39) used for mark-up this month. In short, Congressman, were the State to act favorably on the proposal, we believe the effort would be counter-productive to a final resolution of the d-2 issue on terms generally acceptable to most Alaskans.

It is our belief that there is no Alaskan consensus on d-2 (save, perhaps, a majority which takes a knee-jerk stand in opposition to a "federal lock-up" of Alaskan lands). And we would submit that the reason for this is that there has been little responsible public discussion of the issue which might have served to develop consensus among Alaskans.

Organizations such as the Alaska Federation of Natives, regional non-profit corporations in the Bush and Rural CAP possess the interest and capability to assist in the development of consensus among their respective constituencies. We can do this, despite severely limited resources, because we have recognized the over-riding imperative of achieving federal protection of Native subsistence options in any d-2 legislation which finally emerges.

All of this is not to suggest that it is too late to build Alaskan consensus on the issue (or, at least, parts of it; i.e. resource management). Neither do we suggest that the role of the Legislature in appropriating General Fund monies and providing some leadership on the issue is entirely inappropriate. It is our belief that the Congress would be receptive (indeed, would welcome) evidence that the State is taking steps to put its house in order and to involve its citizens in the

formation of positive recommendations to be made to the Congress. What follows is a series of recommendations which, if followed, would strengthen the State's position in Congress.

1) Begin, in earnest, a series of State-funded workshops to discuss the most appropriate methods of decentralizing the decision-making authority of the Boards of Fish and Game. These workshops should be held throughout the State, adequate materials should be prepared and disseminated to the participants, a real effort should be made to notify in advance and prepare local people to participate, and costs for the workshops should be borne by the State.

(We have been involved in two meetings called by Commissioner Skoog to discuss this topic and applaud the Administration's initiative; however, the first meeting yielded only a consensus that another one was needed, while the second one quickly degenerated into a debate between those who favored decentralization and those who opposed it. Other meetings are planned, but there isn't any indication that the outcome will be any more positive. As well, in neither of the above instances did the State pay any transportation costs for participants, nor were adequate working papers made available.

2) Hold similar conferences on other issues being addressed by d-2 legislation; i.e. land conveyance to Native Corporations and the State, easement policies, the proposed Land Bank, the environmental protection of all federal (public) lands through various administrative devices, the equated economics of "preservation vs. development," the actual proposals for various designations of d-2 lands, state land selection procedures and goals, etc.

3) Increase or initiate funding to appropriate management entities which rely, at present, almost exclusively on federal funds (i.e. the Divisions of Sport Fish and Game within ADF&G, the Coastal Zone Management program, etc.), in order to demonstrate a good faith effort by the State to manage the lands and resources which are presently its responsibility.

4) Support, through adequate financing, State participation in the "interim management plan" called for by AFN President Byron Mallott last week, thereby adding credibility to the State's frequent assertion that subsistence uses are the number one priority of resource allocation decisions and that the State recognizes (and accepts) its partnership role with the federal government in these matters.

5) Recognize that the proposed public lands designations and management systems are, in fact, national concerns and their ultimate disposition is quite properly a subject of national debate and Congressional determination.

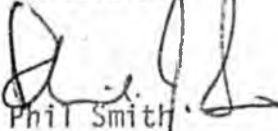
In our opinion, if any or all of the above suggestions were positively acted upon, and forthrightly implemented, the "Alaskan position" in Congress and throughout the United States would be far more palatable.

The Honorable Don Young
January 12, 1978
Page Three

Again, I express our sincere reservations about the wisdom of the approach you have suggested, and reiterate our proposal that the State initiate a positive effort with its own citizens prior to funding a major lobbying effort in Washington, D.C.

Thank you for your attention to these remarks.

Sincerely,



Phil Smith
Executive Director

cc: Governor Jay S. Hammond
Senator Mike Gravel
Senator Ted Stevens
The Honorable Cecil Andrus, Secretary of Interior
Senator John Rader, President, Alaska State Senate
Senator Kay Poland, Chairperson, Senate Resources
Senator John Sackett, Chairperson, Senate Finance
Senator Chancy Croft, Member, Senate d-2 Steering Council
Representative Hugh Malone, President, State House of Representatives
Representative Al Osterback, Chairperson, House Resources
Representative Steve Cowper, Chairperson, d-2 Steering Council
Congressman John Sieberling, Chairperson, Subcommittee General Oversight and Alaska
Lands
Congressman Morris Udall
Congressman Lloyd Meeds
Senator Henry Jackson,
Senator Lee Metcalf
Byron Mallot, President, AFN
Tundra Times

STUART H. BOWDOIN
BOROUGH MANAGER



TELEPHONE
(907) 268-4224

Bristol Bay Borough

Box 189 • NAKNEK, ALASKA 99633

April 22, 1977

Representative Alvin Osterback
Pouch V
Juneau, Alaska 99811

Dear Representative Osterback;

The Bristol Bay Borough strongly supports the following House Bills.

- a. H.B. 450 establishing administrative regional offices for the Department of Health and Social Services.
- b. H.B. 451 establishing administrative regional offices for the Department of Community, and Regional Affairs.
- c. H.B. 452 establishing administrative regional offices for the Department of Fish & Game.

Locating regional offices in Naknek will provide a central location for these state activities and result in faster and more adequate services to residents of Bristol Bay, Alaska Peninsula and the Iliamna Lake Clark Areas.

Your support of these three Bills will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,


Stuart H. Bowdoin
Borough Manager

SHB:smc