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the state. Certainly you want to make sure that all oil and gas which can be constructively used within the state will be used within the state rather than exported, which means that this is one of the criteria that you want to set down as the basis for any sale or disposition of royalty oil or gas.

But one caveat here, and again it goes to the language of your legislation, what are the criteria of Alaska state interests in royalty oil and gas? I suggested several of them as we went down the line: to make sure that you have oil and gas available for energy; to make sure that you have prices for oil and gas in the state which are commensurate with the well head values of oil and gas and don't far exceed these things, so that your prices here are commensurate with your own resource cost; that you have oil and gas available for industrial development -- what kind of industrial development -- there may be a string of alternatives. With a wide range of criteria there has to be, it seems to me, some administrative latitude in judging what disposition of oil and gas is in the best interest of the state. It's not quite the same thing as an oil lease where you say, well, this is the block, these are the coordinates, this is the acreage and everybody come in and bid the highest bonus. I don't think it always follows that the disposition of 100,000 barrels a day of state royalty oil to the highest bidder, with no other terms considered, is necessarily in the best interests of the state. I don't think it necessarily follows that the 100,000 barrels of oil a day should go to the highest bidder who commits to refining it in the state is

in the best interests of the state. I think you may want to look at what he does with the products that are refined from it. And you may not always be able, in terms of the economics of projects, to say that everything which comes out of the refinery, whether it's a finished product or whether it's potential petro chemical feed stocks or whether it's a heavy fuel oil, must all be consumed in the state of Alaska. I think that you must look at all of this. So it's difficult to put it on a purely competitive bid basis. I think you must provide a certain administrative discretion in determining what is in the state's interests. Now this is a hell of a burden to put on the administrator because it means that he's always going to be second guessed by the legislature but this is true of virtually all administrative discretion. It just may be that in this particular interest more dollars and cents will hinge on the decision than is normally the case. But I do suggest to you that administrative discretion is tremendously important in affecting what, in the decision of the legislature itself, are the essential criteria for what is in the best interests of the state of Alaska.

Now let me finally turn to the very interesting discussion that I've been reading at a distance as to the alternative routing of the gas pipeline for the disposition of Prudhoe Bay gas. And here I must give you a specially tentative thought

at this stage in the game, because, in fact, I haven't really been exposed even to all of the information which is available to your legislature, and, in anticipating what my conclusion is going to be, I think that you have very, very scant information available to you.

1. From various points of view, there is very little question that a trans Alaska gas pipeline is very much in the interests of the State of Alaska. I don't know whether you still accept me as an honorary citizen of the state of Alaska but I have the habit of thinking as an Alaskan and it's not difficult for me to put them down. First of all there's the investment during the construction period and the employment which takes place -- this is not just the direct employment and the wages but everything else which comes with it -- and the very obvious concerns of the state about what happens after Alyeska is completed and you have this very peaking of economic activity -- well your gas pipeline gives you a certain ability to continue this level of related economic activity.

Secondly, hopefully you would get the advantage of relatively low cost gas for Alaskan consumption. But here I've got to enter a caveat -- a warning -- You can't really be sure that North Slope gas which reaches Fairbanks or which reaches other parts of Alaska, more populous centers, via the terminal at Cordova or via taps somewhere else along the line will, at that time, represent low cost

energy. Because, for Alaska, what you must compare is what will then be the delivered cost of North Slope gas, against 1. what will be the energy cost of oil which can be used as an alternative to gas. For example, on a btu basis 15¢ gas is equal to 90¢ (15¢ per mcf of gas) per barrel of fuel oil. So if you have 15¢ gas that certainly is a bargain compared to any present or anticipated future prices of fuel oil. But if you start talking about \$1 gas, and you don't have any consumers in Alaska today that pay 15¢ for gas, when you start talking about a \$1 gas you're talking about a \$6 oil. And when you start talking about \$1.50 gas you're talking about \$9 oil. So you must not automatically assume that North Slope gas delivered into consuming centers of Alaska will automatically be a good energy buy as compared to the products derived from crude oil.

Secondly, you don't know by 1977-8-80 at which time there would be via trans Alaska route a major flow of North Slope gas, what the gas availability may already be in the south. Because between now and then there will presumably be extensive exploration elsewhere in Alaska. I go back to my old theme that with the resolution of the land claims and with the opening up of land -- resolution of the pipeline project -- we can expect over the years ahead a very substantial amount of exploration in Alaska, including the first federal lease probably next year in the Gulf of Alaska. Now here you may have proximate sources either of oil or of gas so you must think of what the cost to an Alaskan consumer may be, particularly in south Alaska, of North Slope gas

brought down compared to gas that may be available from closer in locations in the south.

Then, still on the subject of Alaska state interests I refer to the availability of gas as the basis for industrialization. If you were to take your royalty gas 12 1/2% of 1.6 billion cubic feet per day, which is the presumed volume of gas flow if you were taking the maximum amount of associated gas at 2 million barrels a day Prudhoe Bay production, and I'll have so many questions about what's been put before this legislature as the so called facts, will there be 2 million barrels a day out of Prudhoe Bay to which you put an 800 gas to oil ratio, because you may only have about 1.2 million barrels a day of oil production out of that Prudhoe Bay field with that kind of an associated gas ratio so that you would have less royalty gas. These are questions which are very much up in the air and I think that you must be very careful not to take at face value numerical representations that are made in one instance or the other -- but if there were 1.6 billion cubic feet a day at 12 1/2% that's 200 million cubic feet a day, that's well above the total gas consumption in Alaska today. Now, of course, your gas consumption will be going up over the interim period but so will, hopefully, gas production from other sources.

200 million cubic feet a day of gas for residential/commercial purposes, and partially committed for industrialization, could be a hell of an attractive chunk of energy to put on the market. This goes back to how your oil -- royalty oil and gas can be used for industrialization. So, yes the construction and employment factors, certainly the hypothication of royalty gas as a basis for industrialization, potentially low cost gas to consumers with a warning sign against that because that you would have to judge in the future -- one just doesn't know.

The next point: Now we start moving away from the things that are more obviously in the interest of Alaska and moving on to some of the more questionable areas. There's been a considerable discussion before you in previous hearings that I've had the opportunity to read about the significance of transportation costs to markets, debate over respective transportation costs, and discussion over what the value of gas would be in different markets and whether the value of gas in different markets would matter anyway, or whether your gas will be so valuable no matter where it goes that any tax you may put on the gas will be passed on to consumers in any event and therefore you don't have to worry about what route it takes or what the transportation costs are -- you put your severance tax on the gas and that will be passed on. That's not necessarily true for the royalty value

incidentally, but I want to make some comments about that. At the present time -- well, historically the Federal Power Commission had based the well head price of gas on an area pricing formula that was related to average finding and development costs of gas throughout the area plus an incentive factor. This was the price regulation of the Federal Power Commission. In effect they were placing a ceiling on that gas and the reason that they placed the ceiling on the gas was their concern that at a time when there was a lot of gas available compared to the demand for gas, these were in the early days of the expansion of gas transmission lines and gas consumption, their concern that there would be a lot of gas available and it should go at a low price, but that the fact that there were few dominant producers of gas might lead to a higher than necessary price at the well head -- that was their concern. Now the effect of depressing the value of gas at the well head was to so stimulate consumption of gas because it became a bargain among all energy prices -- to such a low price that we expanded our consumption of gas at a faster rate than any other energy source and we are now left with this huge gap between the amount of gas we would like to use and the amount of gas we have and we're faced with this nonsensical alternative of finding enough gas to bring the supply up to the demand no matter how much we have to pay. So the demand is there because it was cheap at first and now, no matter how much we have to pay to meet that demand -- well obviously the answer is that the demand has got to come down.

Also the price of gas has got to come up. And the way that's beginning to happen is by raising the value and the price of gas which the Federal Power Commission already has by allowing for new gas, higher than area prices, that is to say, companies can now negotiate with sellers over the price of new gas, and unless these are outrageous prices they will be approved by the Federal Power Commission. So we have already had the first unhooking of lower 48 gas prices from what has been area cost -- an area cost basis. We already have prices which are beginning to reflect better the value of gas rather than the cost of finding and producing the gas. Obviously providing incentives for more and more exploration. Now are gas prices, therefore, going to be decontrolled? Well, I think at the present time there would be great concern in the United States among consumers and among the representatives in Congress that if there were no control over the price of gas that the price may go up fantastically because of the position of the dominant buyers in the market place. That is to say bidding, competitive bidding up of the price of gas well above what may be, over the longer run, the cost of finding and producing it. So that I think that there's a very real question as to whether there will be complete decontrol of gas, there may be a change in the administrative criteria so that we get more away from the cost basis and get more on to the value of gas and incentives for exploration. But, for example,

would it really -- as I say I think that there is a good chance that there will be a change in the nature of FPC gas pricing policy but I would say a very sharp political debate over decontrol as a whole.

Now if it comes to North Slope gas, would it really be acceptable to the Federal Power Commission if two competitive pipeline groups, El Paso that wants to build a trans Alaska line, liquify and export elsewhere by tanker, Arctic Gas which wants to move by pipeline through Alaska, through Canada and into the Great Lakes area -- would it really be acceptable that these two groups simply go out and compete with each other to contract for that gas supply of Prudhoe Bay? In terms of what is U.S. policy as to how our limited supplies of gas shall be used in the future and at what price it shall reach consumers. I submit that the Federal Power Commission is going to be very, very deeply involved in an evaluation of the alternative routes in two separate contracts. One, since the alternative routes would move the gas to alternative regions of the country what effect will that have on the over all disposition of gas within the United States, given the total supply that is available and what effect will it have on regional gas costs?

El Paso made a very good point that if their gas moves to California that West Texas gas which normally would otherwise have to go to California could be backed out and go to the Great Lakes area. But by the same token if North Slope gas

goes to the Great Lakes area, West Texas gas which flows through a variety of pipelines into the Great Lakes area, could also be diverted through the same or through alternative systems to different parts of the country. The Federal Power Commission is going to look at the effect of alternative pipeline routes upon the total disposition of gas and upon the effect upon regional costs and prices. And I think that you will find as a matter of necessity a far more intensive presentation of data before the Federal Power Commission by anybody who wants to build a pipeline to transport North Slope gas than has been thus far made available to this legislature. I think that the Federal Power Commission, as I said, is going to exercise an intensive degree of jurisdiction in this matter. I think you will learn from the hearings but I think also that the State of Alaska is not without reason to lay before the Federal Power Commission those things which are of intensive matters of interest. That these shall be relevant along with all other considerations in a Federal Power Commission decision. So that there is an area of concern for your here and I think that you must put yourselves in a posture where you both learn from the proceedings and you become a party of interest to the proceedings so that what is of concern to this state is made available to the Federal Power Commission.

Now, on that basis it seems to me, and just since I'm going to be asked this question I might as well anticipate it, I think, in my judgment, on the basis of the information that is available to you, I would not feel that an act or a joint resolution of this legislature in favor of one particular pipeline is highly merited just on the basis of what's been laid before you. That for you to resolve what the interests of the state are is one thing but to make the blanket decision like that goes a bit too far and I think that you would be well advised to wait a bit and both take advantage of the progressive disclosure of information as well as the opportunities to make the state interests heard.

But I've taken more time than I had anticipated and I think, have said the things that occurred to me as meaningful I really ought to give you a chance to decide what you're interested in and put your questions to me. Thank you for your patience.

Rep. McGill called a recess.

McGill: If anyone has any questions for Mr. Lipton will they please just let me know and be recognized.

Sen. Rader: Mr. Lipton, the interests of Alaska and the alternate gas pipeline routes --- from the testimony we've heard it seems to us that both the contenders will be presenting their arguments to the Federal Power Commission starting this summer. They expect the Federal Power Commission to make a decision within nine months to eighteen months perhaps, after they present those arguments. By the timing of that, if they present their arguments starting in July or June or August, and the state has no position, perhaps the Federal Power Commission will have completed its substantial deliberations before the legislature should get back in session. Which would mean that, if we took no position at this time that we might be too late to take a position at a later time, recognizing that we can be a party and then leave it up to the executive branch of the government to state a position for the state as we go along. Is there any alternative to that in your mind? As I take it from what you say based on the information that we have it would not be fair to go forward. If we wait, we may have waited too long as a legislature.

Mr. Lipton: Senator Rader, I see no difficulty with the legislature taking a position on those aspects of the gas pipeline which are directly and visibly relevant to the state of Alaska. That is, why, with respect to these various points

that this would be of importance to the state of Alaska. But this is a different thing from an enactment by the legislature which says that the State of Alaska whole heartedly supports one particular pipeline application. There's a difference between expressing the interests of the state -- now this can be done through joint resolution. I presume that in the absence of the legislature in session you have an executive department which is not exactly blind to the interests of the state and so on. But I just think that it is a bit previous to go on record without reservation, saying that, weighing all considerations -- and a lot of them may not be visible to you today -- the State of Alaska supports one particular pipeline application.

Now I appreciate the need on the part of one particular group to want very much the most unequivocal act from this legislature as a means of persuing its interests. I guess I read in the testimony that this is necessary to get the concurrence of the Board of Directors of the corporation. Most boards of directors find that the acts of the legislature of Alaska are anathema to them. It's nice to know that one board of directors wants a positive act out of the legislature of Alaska. But in the light of all of the uncertainties that are involved, it is very, very difficult for me to understand that the El Paso group, for example, is not prepared to pursue their application without -- and I'm not speaking for them -- please don't interpret -- without this act from the legislature which, even if they have it the whole thing still falls within the purview of the Federal

Power Commission and, when it comes down to it, knowing what the hearings before the Federal Power Commission are, that this one act of the legislature will weigh so heavily in the balance that it motivates the board of directors in advance. I can't speak for them. And if you're told that you must accept it. But I feel that for you to go -- I'm speaking at too great length -- for you to go on record as to what the interests of the state are, what the interests of the state are is one thing. For you to go on record unequivocally, without exposure to all the other pros and cons as endorsing without reservation one application, I think would be moving precipitously.

Sen Rader: You're not speaking too lengthly as far as I'm concerned. It seems as though it is difficult for us to state our interests unless we have some idea of the relative costs, for example. If you did read the testimony it's highly disputed as to what the cost would be going one way or the other. Only thing I guess we can say is that Alaska would like to see it come through Alaska providing the cost of that method of transportation is not exorbitant as compared to alternate methods. Can we say any more?

Mr. Lipton: I don't even think you have to say that. I don't think that the question of respective transportation costs . . . (break in tape) does not necessarily mean that you are saying that you are prejudging everything else including transportation cost, the effect upon supply balances in the lower 48 states and everything else. Somebody else

will decide that. This is your representation to the FPC or to anybody else who's concerned with what the interests of the state of Alaska are.

Sen. Salides: My concern is the binding effects clause, Mr. Lipton. One of the pieces of legislation in the Senate now calls for a possible lapsing of the binding effects clause. I would be interested in knowing whether we should, for perhaps three years is too short, if it should be a longer period of time permitted, or perhaps we should forget about the binding effects clause all together. That it is maybe better in than out. Would you give us your comments?

Mr. Lipton: I beg your indulgence. I would like to pass on that question now for two reasons. One, not being a lawyer I may even be inclined to pass in the future, but I haven't had a chance to look at that aspect of it. I only got the material very recently and I would at least like to think about it. But at this point I just don't feel that, lawyer or not a lawyer, I could make an intelligent comment.

Sen. Salides: Thank you very much, sir. I know that, and I must apologize for having asked, because I know that the material did get to you only this morning as a matter of fact.

Mr. Lipton: I'd really like to read it carefully.

Rep. Parker: I have a question Mr. Lipton on the oil depletion allowance -- the deduction from our state income tax. And I can't quite get it through my head why it strikes you as a strange place to start in reforming our corporate income tax laws in Alaska. As you pointed out, the level of profit and profitability of that industry is pretty unique among

the corporations at work in Alaska and with the background of what's happening on the national level as regards the oil depletion allowance it seems to me that that's a good place to start here. Why do you find that narrow?

Mr. Lipton: First of all, let me just say that I'm not sure that the oil and gas industries profitability in Alaska over all at this stage in the game is in any case unique unless it is for the fact that they are spending a hell of a lot more money than they are taking in at the present time. So that I don't think that -- the uniqueness will come about when you really start getting major exploitation of Alaska's reserves and therefore you basically have time to look at it. But the reason that I said that I thought that it was -- that I wondered why this was the place to start is that there are so many aspects of the transition from taxable income at the federal level and taxable income at the state level. There are so many things -- how you move from a to b that ought to be looked into -- that why seize upon the depletion allowance as just one aspect of it and if you do how much does it really mean in terms of current production? Will it not then be a temptation to forget about the very basic problem which is to review the whole state corporate income tax legislation. Why the rush to get to it now in anticipation? So that what I'm saying is that it is difficult for me to react positively to it at this stage in the game when you put all of these things together. Now I don't know if I'm responding directly to your question. I'm not trying to avoid anything. But the basic thing is that

aside from the fact that you may be able to calculate and even then I think it's very, very difficult -- I don't know if the calculation has been laid before you -- what the effect would be upon corporate income tax payments here in Alaska if you eliminated percentage depletion. Has that been submitted to you by the Finance Department? Has anybody made an estimate of that?

Rep. Parker: We have several estimates.

Mr. Lipton: That's interesting. It's very, very difficult. It's incredibly difficult. How do you isolate the companies operating in Alaska and determine really what -- you see you must know two things -- you must know what the effective rate of percentage depletion is that these companies claim on the federal income tax. That's very difficult to find company by company -- if not impossible. And secondly what happens under the allocation process to their taxable income at the federal level by the time it gets translated into taxable income at the state level, in view of the allocation process. That's why I say that this is one minor aspect in what ought to be the major preoccupation of your legislature over a reasonable length of time if it's carefully studied.

Rep. Parker: Mr. Lipton, how do you account for the fact that -- of the federal thrust to change this law now?

Mr. Lipton: Oh I think . . .

Rep. Parker: The point I'm making Mr. Lipton, and my understanding of this is that -- not that deep as you've probably caught on. But it seems to me that if we have a deduction

which is questionable even on the national level and if the state is as as we are in looking for ways to come up with new money just to maintain our budget, that this is the natural place for us to start. There is a chance that this is needed to start with on the national level and, it seems to me, that if we wait for the federal program to move we put ourselves in the position of subsidizing the companies here when we simply can't even pay our own bills.

Mr. Lipton: First let me say that there's nothing in the nature of your question to suggest that you haven't exposed yourself pretty thoroughly to this subject. There are many moves afoot to change federal legislation. One has to do with foreign depletion -- there's an obvious reason for that. Why provide certain tax advantages for people to explore abroad as compared to in the United States. There's a move to eliminate depletion on domestic exploration on the grounds that it has not done the job that it was set up to do. In other words it hasn't provided the incentive to domestic exploration. And instead of having special tax advantages through domestic depletion, let's get rid of it and if necessary let the prices go up to a level to compensate for what would have been the savings through percentage depletion. We ourselves have very strongly urged that at the federal level and you might want to consider this at the state level, that in effect you take percentage depletion which has not been a powerful tool for spurring domestic exploration and convert it into earned depletion. That is to say that up to whatever level of percentage depletion is a statutory level, 22% now or the

industry wants it to go up to a higher percentage, some legislators in Washington want to reduce it -- but whatever the statutory rate of depletion is, that that amount of depletion can be taken only to the extent that the companies in the taxable year have invested money in qualified exploration. In other words they've earned the depletion. Incidentally Canada has that law. Canada has a 33% depletion rate -- percentage depletion allowance -- but you get it only if you reinvest in exploration. Now you may want to consider that here in Alaska to the extent that both taxable income is allocable by formula and therefore depletion is allocable by formula and that that depletion will apply only to the extent that it is invested. I don't know. But if you're arguing about the pros and cons of the depletion allowance we would have said that depletion makes more sense if you earn it than if it just goes by the boards. Now there's a third proposal before the House committee in Washington to escalate the percentage depletion downward as the price of oil goes upward. So there are many many things and I think that the main thrust, of course, has been against the fact that the depletion allowance has represented major savings in taxation for the oil industry which might not have been so bad if a domestic exploration had taken place. Obviously it had not. So there's a question as to how effective it is. But I certainly don't want to make a case for your subsidizing oil companies by

virtue of foregoing taxation up here. Quite the contrary. What I'm saying is that you have the time, in view of the minimal impact that the elimination of percentage depletion is likely to have for the next few years, to look very carefully into your whole state income tax law.

Sen T. Miller: Mr. Lipton, I thought your comments regarding the position of the Province of Alberta were interesting with reference to its own gas and oil reserves. I think just a general conceptual question if I may, sir. Do you, on the national level, given the energy picture in the United States today see any pitfalls or danger signs for Alaska to watch for as an oil producing state as opposed to those in Congress who represent the oil consuming states, in terms of, for example, the possible configuration of whatever development we might try to do with our royalty oil and royalty gas. Is there a possibility, through possible mandatory allocations or lids on the amount of money the state can take from its resource. Are there dangers of these being imposed by the federal Congress in any way or do you see any problem in that area at all?

Mr. Lipton: Senator Miller, I don't want to forecast what public policy is going to be with respect to allocations for example. But I don't think that it's in the nature of our energy and oil balances over the years ahead that we are going to have for a long period of time, by which I mean into 1977-8 continued allocations. We may have but I would doubt it very much. I think that what's happening today is in response to

the acute supply problem that arose not only over the lag in the domestic availability but also the Arab oil embargo and a combination of circumstances plus the fact that we had fantastic increases in energy and oil consumption very rapidly which are bound to be leveling off over the years ahead. So I don't think that, aside from your problem today about how you fit into the allocations game, I don't visualize that you'll be faced in 1977-8, when oil and gas becomes available out of Prudhoe, with the possibility that the federal government is going to be worrying about your preempting additional supplies over and beyond what a national allocation scheme is going to be. But I could be wrong.

Now the other thing, constitutionally there are limitations on what the state of Alaska can do. For example, you can't have differential taxation on gas produced for internal consumption vs. gas exported. You can't interfere with inter-state commerce. By the same token I don't believe that the federal government constitutionally can qualify or circumscribe what the state does with its own resources so long as its not discriminatory.

Rep. Randolph: Mr. Lipton, in light of the energetic activity of the special session in the area of taxation and in light of the very rapidly changing situation and the fact that we don't see any great increase in our production in the next three years, would you give your opinion as to

whether this is the right time to be considering any significant new tax measures or maybe we better let things cool off for a year or two and take a long hard look at it and then when we do get production on the line, when it does mean something to us in dollars and cents, be ready to do whatever is appropriate then.

Mr. Lipton: Well, from the standpoint of industry obviously no time is a good time to raise taxes. From the standpoint of the state's revenue needs, almost any time is a time when you have to consider what you can get in the form of taxes. But if you're looking at tax policy I think that I would repeat what I've had occasion to say very often, I think that continuous amendment of your taxation is really not to be recommended. Now the temptation is always to do it because of your revenue needs and I can again say that that is a pressing problem that confronts every legislature -- even that in my own state -- but the assumption always that the last amendment to the tax whether it's an ad valorem property tax as you enacted, a special ad valorem property tax as you enacted in the special session to provide for your revenue needs which now seems to be insufficient, or the amendments to the oil severance tax which set up a new schedule different from the previous schedule or a change in the taxation on the gas with the idea that somehow you were coming to a new correct level of taxation -- I think is a mistake. There are times when the future is more

visible and there are times when it is less visible. And really what you're doing with your taxation, especially the severance taxation now, is working with a relatively small volume of state oil and gas production and, as I said in the case of gas production, half of it is consumed within the state. I would always urge against tax changes unless they are impelled by revenue needs where you've carefully judged all of the alternatives or where they are in a sense induced by major changes in the oil environment which make it very appropriate. Now, whereas I said in the past in talking about the oil severance taxes and royalties that anywhere the relation between prices and cost is an important factor as to the appropriate level of taxation or royalties. It also follows that in the last two or three years we have had a complete change in the historical relationship between oil and gas values and costs of production. A complete change. And the old, the magic royalty number 12 1/2% or the old levels of severance taxation which had obtained in the past are obviously looked upon by legislators everywhere as well as by sheiks and shaws as no longer appropriate to the changing circumstances because of the tremendous increase in the value of energy that has taken place. But you in Alaska, I still think, have time before you must make the next step of decisions excepting in so far as you must submit yourself to the pressure of revenues and then you balance very, very carefully all of the alternatives that are open to you.

Rep. Huber: Mr. Lipton, when you were talking to us about our income tax structure were you talking strictly from the present law on the books or were you also referring to HB 177 which I thought may have been called to your attention.

Mr. Lipton: I was talking entirely about the law that's now on the books. HB 177?

Mr. Huber: There's been a great deal of discussion on this floor in the past week and I'd just like to request that you look it over before you leave town.

Mr. Lipton: I'm sorry, I have not had a copy of 177 before. It's just been given to me and I will of course look through it and answer your question at a later time.

Rep. Meekins: Mr. Lipton, on 171 that doesn't have anything to do with oil and gas. It's the amendment proposed to put the depletion -- to take off the depletion allowance state income taxes. You were talking about incentives -- if you tax oil in the ground then you would change the time table for some things and I was wondering -- part of the tax schedule on the depletion allowance and things seems to be giving incentives for different things. Isn't the current situation likely to give great incentive disregarding what the state of Alaska might do -- overriding incentives to explore or not to explore that will maintain on their own?

Mr. Lipton: I certainly would feel, and this is evidenced by the attitude of virtually all the important oil exploring and gas exploring companies that there is tremendous interest in the potential of Alaska. Now look, we've had three unfortunate years during which their interest in a sense flagged because the land freeze didn't really permit the opening up of land and so on. I don't think you need incentives for people to come in and explore here. I think the only thing that you have to be concerned about is that there isn't a concatenation of legislation which kind of subtracts too much from the incentives and even there you know that's . . .

Rep. Meekins: This is what my question is. Obviously there is some reason to put a tax on reserves in the ground which may bring you \$50 to \$100 million dollars a year or something -- it seems like a lot of money -- it seems like it would make a company think about whether they go out and discover another barrels or something because they wouldn't want to have to pay tax on the proven reserves before they get it out. But then again just like someone else said, you said I guess before that the reserves are increasing in value and it seems that there are so many other incentives that they're willing to spend \$5 - \$6 billion on the pipeline that might not be that big of a "disincentive".

Mr. Lipton: They're willing to spend \$5 - \$6 billion on a pipeline because they found a Prudhoe Bay. If Prudhoe Bay had not been discovered you'd find very little interest in exploration on the North Slope even where the structures look promising enough for . . .

Rep. Meekins: But they wouldn't have to pay a tax on oil and gas reserves unless they were successful.

Mr. Lipton: Yes, but let me make this point. Well that's why I said that when it comes to future leasing you can't expect to make any appreciable money out of a resources tax which is on the books because people who will be leasing any kind of land in Alaska will be thinking and therefore discounting what they would have to pay in the form of resources tax if they were successful. In other words, what you might make in the future on future resources taxes you'll not be making in terms of either a royalty rate or a bonus or whatever the case may be. Now I don't want to exaggerate this. This is something you can't calculate. Furthermore, when we say that any kind of additional tax legislation tends to effect incentives, what it means is that it tends to effect incentives at the margin. Now what is the margin? It means that something which a company might consider but is dubious about they might no longer consider if the Alaskan environment changes. How big is the margin? How much exploration would you lose? That's very difficult to say and all I can recall is that when the first proposal for the amendment of your old

standing severance tax came up which at that time was 4% including the special post-earthquake tax and the conservation tax and everything else -- all that lumped together came to 4% and we were opposed to recommend the substantial increase in the schedule of severance taxation and the industry attitude was that this would destroy or affect incentives and so on. I felt at that time that in theory yes but as a practical matter it wouldn't weigh heavily in the balance. I don't think that a resources tax per se may go so far as to affect it at the margin but the point I made was that it doesn't affect current production because it is already subject to the severance tax. It won't affect your revenues from the future even if it has no effect on exploration because it will have been discounted. So it's a revenue measure directed at Prudhoe Bay. Is this really what you want to do under the present circumstances in the light of all of the other alternatives?

Rep. Meekins: Another question about the incentives. I know that it may seem arbitrary to choose the depletion allowance of all the things that we could have chosen to start with but the depletion allowance is one of the most widely publicized and is something that we can figure out rather rapidly. And when it was found that the oil companies only paid \$140,000 all 38 companies or whatever they were this year, that was a kind of selling point or an incentive to do something. Whether it made any real logical sense or not, that was not one of the motivations. But you know

when you consider all of these different things, and I know some of them but I can't consider all the things that we could start with, it makes sense to look at the whole package and I agree that we should do that and I hope we will but, lacking that, we do have a chance, because of amendments or some possibility of taking out the depletion allowance and just on the logic based on that question alone, not whether it is the most efficient or the most effective way to go about it, whether or not -- what is your advice as regards the depletion allowance. And take into consideration that what other arguments you maintain on the federal level really don't have much to do with Alaska because those incentives some 98% or something would still be in effect. Whatever reason for the depletion allowance I don't think has much to do with Alaska. If you were just limited to that narrow scope and that arbitrary decision, then what would you say?

Mr. Lipton: Look, for Alaska to eliminate the depletion allowance and the calculation of income subject to state corporate income tax is a way of increasing your corporate income tax take from oil companies. I have no idea -- I wouldn't even know -- how to go about estimating what the effect, if any would be on your revenues. I would absolutely be at a loss because you first have to ask of all the oil companies operating here in Alaska which of them are going to be subject in any event to state corporate income tax. Your allocation formula is what makes the whole transition. And you've got to look at it

company by company and none of us have access to the federal corporate income tax returns of individual companies. The worst thing I could do is to give you an answer now which I hope is a responsive answer. I'm making myself sound like I'm pleading for the oil industry. That's not my purpose. But you cannot look at individual figures on federal income tax paid by a company but you may -- used to be you couldn't get it because all they show is total income taxes which included foreign. Now more and more of the financial statements, the annual reports, are breaking down to show federal income tax paid. When you look at that figure and you compare that with what they tell their stockholders their total income is and say My God, what a low federal income tax they paid, you have no way of telling how much of that had to do with depletion, how much of that is the foreign tax credit and so on and so forth. There is no way of doing it. To translate it into the impact on the state would be very, very difficult. I don't know what effect this whole thing is going to have and the other argument, namely that for better or for worse the depletion allowance had a certain effect upon the income of the oil industry and if you eliminate the depletion allowance other things being equal prices are going to have to go up at least as a partial offset. Now you may say that the prices have gone up so much already why do they need an offset but this becomes a complicated argument. But there's no way of offsetting the effect upon corporate income of

an increase of the Alaska state income tax. The prices of their crude oil are not determined here in Alaska. It is determined elsewhere. So, to eliminate the depletion allowance is, to put it very simply, an increase in the Alaska state income tax from oil companies operating here but to an extent that I think is probably almost indeterminant. I don't know.

Rep. Meekins: We do have some figures. I don't know if they're accurate or not.

Mr. Lipton: I would like somewhere in the course of the next few days to look at your figures and to be able to discuss it with your various committees.

Rep. Meekins: Just one more question. Mr. Lipton, when you talk about allocation formula making a difference between the translation between the federal tax liability or federal taxes and state, do you mean allocations between the states of profits, is that what you're talking about?

Mr. Lipton: No. What you do here in Alaska I would suspect for virtually all the companies you're dealing with now is to take the federal income, their income subject to federal taxation and then you say well how much of that should be allocated to Alaska by virtue of their operations in Alaska and you have a formula which is based upon the proportion of their value of assets in Alaska, their total assets, the proportion of sales and expenses. And from that formula you impute the income which is presumed to have originated in Alaska and which is, therefore, subject to Alaskan taxation. I think this is an imprecise and a poor

tool on which to base your state corporate income tax when you're talking about the oil and gas operations in Alaska over future years.

Sen. Hensley: Mr. Lipton, I have a question on petroleum reserve No. 4. Our two senators have split on the issue of Pet 4, whether or not to support the development of the transfer of the control of Pet 4 from the Navy to the Interior Department and whether to develop the reserves. I'm not sure if you're advising either or both of our senators but they did -- Senator Stevens was concerned about the effect of the development of Pet 4 on Alaska state lands near Pet 4 but Senator Gravel wanted to see the transfer to the Interior Department under the terms of the mineral leasing act and I'm not sure what your thinking is or if you have an opinion on that subject but it seems to me that it is a subject that could have some effect on Alaska.

Mr. Lipton: Senator Hensley, I've always had certain difficulty in understanding the national security that is served by the establishment of Pet 4 as a Naval Petroleum reserve. In principle, if the United States runs out of oil elsewhere we will some day in the future develop Pet 4 which means drill the wells and put in the pipeline or maybe if we wait long enough Alyeska will be available because Prudhoe Bay will have been exhausted. But as a strategic reserve against emergency it really isn't worth a hoot in hell because when the Navy runs short of oil they can't get a barrel of oil out of Pet 4. It's a kind

of a stagnant concept. . So I have a personal feeling that the national security has to be served through a whole wide range of measures over and above maintaining that reserve in its pristine unviolated state. Now, obviously if there were to be development and exploitation at Pet 4 this would have an effect upon the leasing of state lands around it but I'm not so sure that it would be a negative effect. It may very well, by the stimulation of activity provide a spur to the leasing of proximate state lands because obviously if you are going to develop major reserves there there's going to be a second pipeline out of the North Slope.

Sen. Hensley: You feel then that, from the standpoint of energy demand, that there would have to be a substantially greater demand for additional crude within the country before we could get some action on the retention of this reserve by the Navy. It seems to me that we're in an era of aircraft rather than seagoing ships.

Mr. Lipton: There's a -- the issue of our petroleum reserves is not only a matter of national security, it also involves a very, very sharp conflict in our national legislature over who would develop it and the possible windfall gains to the oil industry which has just experienced the most fantastic increases in profitability if this were to be opened up so it's a very, very hot political potato for a lot of different reasons. I have no idea how the debate would go and when you get such a division of opinion for so many different

reasons my instinct tells me that there won't be any action on it because it takes a positive effort to change what has been public policy.

Rep. Fink: I have a couple questions, Mr. Lipton. Are you fairly well acquainted with this multi state compact for taxing -- the multi state compact on taxing between the states. Well it just has to do with apportionment of income and expenses and the current litigation and whether or not it is a valid law. It seems to me that in many cases the State of Alaska income tax law might be changed depending on the outcome of this litigation -- whether or not it will hold up -- and whether or not we should go our own route or should accept

It seems to me that we're a couple years away from that being resolved.

Mr. Lipton: Mr. Fink, just give me a moment will you please. The practice by the State of allocation is not a universal practice. The last count which our staff made suggests that there are 41 states that have some form of corporate net income tax and despite all my vehement protestations my own state is not one among them. But there are 41 states that have corporate state income taxes and there are 24 that use net income as defined from the federal income tax as a base. There are states which in effect have corporate income tax laws where there is within those states a separate identification of income within the state which puts it within the reach of the state taxing powers so it does not have to be made by the allocation method.

Rep. Fink: Well a year or two ago we passed a law becoming part of this multi state compact and I know that that law is going to be contested and it seems to me that whether or not we wish to continue the multi state compact route or go the other route -- if the law is thrown out obviously we don't want to go that way. The other one -- I wanted to see to what extent you can give us the advice of your firm as to what might happen in the next couple years and if you could touch on the things that would effect Alaska directly and the United States in general. That last piece that you put out with regard to what would happen to the economics of the world based upon the cost of oil seemed to paint a very, very dire picture as to what was going to happen which obviously tells us that it is based upon if there is no change. One of the things I'd like for you to comment on if you would is do you anticipate that, for example, the oil embargo will be lifted. Do you anticipate that there will be a roll back in world prices or do you anticipate that there probably will not be. You mentioned that coal would be a very important factor in the United States and yet it appears that we have several problems today and that would be the various laws against strip mining and the difficulties of the clean air act. Just yesterday in the paper there was an article where Secretary Morton appeared before the Senate committee and I know Senator Stevens asked him the question in regard to some of the problems we have in

Alaska, for example, Corps of Engineers impact statements on drilling off shore, and Morton seems to indicate that the administration is trying to re-evaluate this whole picture and we've also heard the same from the President that he is going to do some re-evaluation of some of the federal policies and I presume it has to regard the two items of energy and environment. I know there aren't any absolute answers but your firm is quoted in the national papers all the time and I assume that you're a lot more up on this than we are. Can you just give us some kind of a picture? some alternatives or something?

Mr. Lipton: Mr. Flnk, the memorandum that you refer to which was called "Implications of Exploding Oil Costs," has gotten a tremendous amount of publicity because, not through our efforts, but through some recipient, it got into the public domain and its now become an official document of the congressional committee so it will be published and is in the public domain -- this has been followed, and you will get it shortly, by a memorandum which we call "The Implications of Austerity in World Oil." Now basically what I was saying about the two possibilities of slow down in energy consumption vs. enforced austerity in world oil and what the effects would be are based upon the thinking that our firm had developed since January in response to this terrific turn around in the circumstances of world oil. Now you ask, what are the chances of a roll back? First of all let me say that the fantastically

high prices which resulted from competitive bidding on a relatively small volume of government oil that went as high as \$17 a barrel for some Iranian oil and \$20 a barrel for Nigerian oil have already begun to recede. This is the result of two things -- well, it's really the result of three things: First of all, there has been a slow down in reaction to the shortage of oil and fantastically high prices in oil consumption all over the world. There's been tremendous economies in the consumption of oil including in the United States. Secondly, production has been increasing over these last six months. That is to say, production from areas outside of the Arab countries, through the natural expansion and the Arab countries themselves with the exception of the embargo have restored a major part of their cutbacks so that when consumption slows down and production begins to increase the shortfall is less and therefore the competitive pressure to buy oil at any price is even less. On top of that American companies had under our own pricing policy been inspired to go out and buy on foreign markets as much oil as they could get to fill their refinery needs because they were permitted to pass on in the United States in their product prices, the full cost of their purchased foreign crude so in a sense we inspired American companies, not so much the major internationals but other refiners, to go out and bid competitively for that oil and bid against the Japanese and the Germans. Now recently

we have a new crude oil allocation policy and the crude oil allocation policy says that any refiner who has a surplus of crude compared to the national average must sell some of that crude to those refiners who have a shortfall of crude compared to the national average and must sell it at a price equal to the average price of the crude invoiced in. Complications aside, what it means is that if you buy a hell of a lot of foreign crude at a fantastically high price and then bring it into the United States and have to re-sell it to somebody else at a lower price then you certainly don't want to go out and bid for that foreign crude. It goes even beyond that. A lot of the major oil companies are finding that they are better off using foreign crude in foreign refineries rather than importing them into the United States if they become so called surplus refiners. So putting it all together we've had a very considerable deflation of foreign oil prices but only around the edges. The main stream of foreign crude still runs that's out of the Middle East and very much higher out of Africa and now Venezuela. So the real question is not whether around the margins, around the edges, the prices come down but whether the prices for the mainstream will be rolled back from the present level. Now, the hopeful sign there is that Yamani (sp?) who's the Minister of Mines for Saudi Arabia has indicated that he feels that the price is too high and that he's prepared in a sense to roll it

back and if he's prepared to in a sense increase Saudi Arabia production he can really force the roll back on everybody else too even though Iran and Libya and Algeria say hell no, today's prices are too low, not too high. Because the capacity of Saudi Arabia to expand is very great. But I think that there will be some roll back. How appreciable it is, I don't know. The real question is if it's roll back far enough or at least accompanied by deferred payments to this austerity in world oil doesn't have to come about and we don't have this kind of a crunch.

Now as to the questions you raised about coal. It's certainly true that there are near term limitations on our ability to exploit our vast coal reserves. First of all because of the sulfur restrictions on the burning of high sulfur coal and strip mining restrictions on our access to the low sulfur coal -- most of which is in the west and it's close to the surface and could be strip mined. The federal government in its Operation Independence is talking about really very very substantial increases in coal production over the next five to six years. We ourselves in our own projections are rather more conservative. We think that the pace at which there will be either investment to meet reasonable sulfur restrictions or the pace at which the federal government will agree to the strip mining of federal coal lands in the light of all of

the environmental problems -- that it will be a moderate rate at which it takes place. It will not be a crash program. But we still see very substantial increases in coal either to be directly burned or by 1980 at least the beginnings of gasification of coal. But certainly we are not going to meet all our energy problems within five years by the exploitation of coal reserves that are so great that if we had time we could do so. The big increases in coal production will come in the 1980's not in the 1970's because of these very environmental problems that you raise which is why I think that we will not achieve self sufficiency in energy in the 1970's. Hopefully we will mitigate our dependence upon Middle East oil but we will need a relatively high price level for energy in the United States in order to achieve that. And apropos of your gas problems it also means that if we're going to have a relatively high price level for all energy that gas which had been sold at a discount from oil for example will have to be sold at a premium above oil. The shortage of gas means that it will be used in those end uses where it is most valuable not where it is least valuable, which means residential and commercial uses rather than being burned on the boiler. If you think about it there -- we are talking about the possible movement of 1.6 billion cubic feet a day of North Slope gas to the United States. By 1980 if Mackenzie Delta comes to fruition and if the arctic islands really turn up sufficient gas reserves we might be importing

maybe 4 billion cubic feet a day of additional gas from Canada because under those conditions they would be surplus. So we're talking about 1.6 or 1.4 billion cubic feet a day out of the North Slope and out of the Canadian arctic maybe . . . we're burning more than 10 billion cubic feet a day of gas a day under the boilers on the U.S. Gulf Coast. How much reserves would we have to find in order to be able to create a capacity to produce 10 billion cubic feet a day of gas. Now obviously if you look five, six, seven years ahead we are not going to be using gas in the same pattern as we are today which is one of the things the Federal Power Commission is going to be most concerned about when they look at the disposition of North Slope gas among regions and the patterns of oil and gas consumption by end uses in these various regions. But gas is going to sell at a premium -- if you're talking about oil, say \$7 U.S. oil being the numeraire for energy in the United States then gas is going to sell at a premium not at a discount below.

Rep. Fink: Can I assume that you do not anticipate any kind of severe economic situation to cause any of these laws to be changed so that coal could be used . . .

Mr. Lipton: No. I do think that just as the pendulum has in past years swung very sharply in the direction of maximum environmental protection -- whatever the cost -- the tightness of energy and its effect upon our environment is going to cause a rethinking of how we make our trade offs. I think there'll be some relaxation in our general approach to

environmental -- but I hope not too much. I'm a strong environmentalist. But I think it's in the cards.

Rep. Warwick: Mr. Lipton, we've set up a computer model on which we've put our revenue projections and budgetary projections on and we've pumped into that various assumptions. Now the most likely assumptions have projected about a \$200 million deficit shortly before the Alyeska line comes on stream so we're in a position now of trying to determine what to do about that deficit. Either we substantially cut back spending which would be rather difficult realistically or we initiate some plan to raise a substantial sum of money, \$200 million, and it seems to me that there's probably only two ways to do that. One would be to have another lease sale, a sizeable one, or maybe we could sell some of our future royalties -- interests in the North Slope. Do you have any comments on the desirability of either of these? I should say, the preferability of one over the other.

Mr. Lipton: Mr. Warwick, this is a very difficult question for me to answer because every time I have been up here the same set of circumstances really confronts the legislature and the matter of meeting projected budgetary deficit was a factor in the amendment of your severance tax -- which then when you put in your cents per barrel floor under it -- and this was certainly a factor in your ad valorem pipeline tax and so on -- so it's very difficult for me to know how

the State of Alaska goes about from year to year meeting through current legislation what are anticipated budgetary deficits in the future. When it comes to leasing, that means leasing in '76 or '77 or so how do you forecast what kind of income will come from the leases? I think I saw somewhere a projection that maybe \$800 million could be raised through progressive leasing of state lines -- state lands. Now I don't know whether that projection is on the basis of the September 69 lease sale on the North Slope or whether it was on a projection of the first, second or third lease sales on the North Slope which turned up nothing on that order of magnitude. It's difficult to project what you're going to get out of lease sales. You stop and think about it. In September 1969 when you raised this fantastic money for the state out of lease sales I'll wager that there's not a company that provided you with that bonus money but that regrets it tremendously today in terms of what they proved up on the acreage they bought for those bonuses. The big oil finds have been on leases that were from the early North Slope lease sales where you got \$160 an acre for your land. Now, are you going to get a lot of money out of lease sales proximate to Prudhoe Bay or other stuff on the North Slope which is available to you -- it's very difficult to project. The big revenue for the state comes from success not from the leasing of wild cat lands. It's the success that

one inspires other people to come in near by and pay big bonuses and two that gives you royalty and severance tax income in the future. So I would just caution you as to how much money you could expect realistically to raise on future lease sales but then I'm sure you're asking the same question of Mr. Herbert and Mr. Berrill and I don't want to say anything which contradicts their estimates. They're much closer to it than I am. All I can say is that if you're looking at a projected deficit, then from my standpoint -- I really have no answer except to say that insofar as it involves any form of taxation involving the oil industry which is what you bring me up here to talk about what I urge is that you look very carefully on all the alternatives and measure the necessity as against all of the alternatives and beyond that I really can't be more responsive.

Rep. Warwick: What about timing. Do you think the timing-- say this current year would be right for a lease sale -- one which we could expect to raise a substantial sum of money from.

Mr. Lipton: Well it depends upon what land you put up. If you look around the state -- the state has not really made its selection of the bulk of the federal land to which it is entitled under the Statehood Act. That has to wait upon the native claims selection. What is remaining in state hands for leasing? Around Cook Inlet there is disputed area with the federal government. On the North Slope you still have some local federal lands. They may be very attractive

especially if they are gas prone areas. I'm not a geologist. I really can't answer that.

But the timing. There's nothing wrong with the timing. The question is what's available for leasing. I would say that if it's -- the further north it is the more it depends upon Alyeska or a gas pipeline decision, the later you lease the more bonuses you would get out of it. Because otherwise companies are faced with paying dead rents and maybe even a resource tax for a considerable period of time so they may not be too inclined. But if it's elsewhere where it doesn't depend upon the pipeline from the North Slope I would say that there probably is no better time. There's nothing wrong with the timing.

Rep. Warwick: In directing your attention to the depletion allowance and your resource tax which would be an oil and gas tax in place, I was under the impression that you felt that if we enacted either of these measures it could have a serious impact on any future lease sales -- maybe even as much to offset the additional revenues that we would gain by initiating these taxes. Did I read you right?

Mr. Lipton: No. I don't think I said it and if I said it that's not what I meant. For example the resources tax. I'm not really implying that you will lose in the future sources of state income that will more than offset what you can gain in the interim as a resource tax. That's not what I'm saying. What I said was that the only practicable effect of the resource tax is the revenues that you will get from the Prudhoe Bay reserves in this interim period.

That is to say, it's specifically pointed at them because if a tax stays on the books beyond 77-78 and therefore becomes applicable to the reserves of different oil fields that are found subsequently -- that so long as it is on the books any company which is bidding on future lease sales will take that into account. I did not say that you would lose more in the future than you're taking in in the present. Nor did I mean to imply that if you eliminate the depletion allowance as -- the percentage depletion allowance -- as an item in your state corporate income tax -- that this would so inhibit exploration that in effect it would cost you more than you would take in. My real speculation is how much you'll ever take in on it, and whether this becomes the last step in the amendment to the state income tax law which I think ought to be looked at as a whole rather than as a part.

Mr. Warwick: What about selling an interest in our future royalties? Do you see any disadvantages to the state in using that as a method of raising a substantial sum of money for a short period of time.

Mr. Lipton: Mr. Warwick, I don't quite know what that means. If you're talking about selling future royalties what you're really saying is that the state is going to borrow money from security future royalties. The state can borrow money a thousand different ways and if it wants to borrow money

see I'm not even familiar with your constitutional process here so you're asking me to talk in different areas. I want to address myself to the one part where I think I may have a certain exposure and competence, not to all parts. The state borrows money and obviously wants to borrow at the lowest rate of interest. There are a lot of ways of doing this. Now I don't know what effect the hypothecation of future royalties would have on the interest rate that you have to pay. I don't think at the present time that Alaska's state credit is that bad that in a sense if you go into the money market, the capital markets to borrow money to the extent that your constitution permits you to do it. In a sense, selling future royalties is almost like a tax anticipation certificate. Instead of being in anticipation of the taxes it is in anticipation of royalties. Maybe you can do as well by a tax anticipation certificate if you are allowed to do that over more than one budgetary year, I don't know whether or not you're allowed to do it. But I don't know really that there is any such thing as selling the royalty unless you want to sell not specific royalties but if you want to hypothecate to a speculator an undivided interest in some portion of the state royalty I'm sure you can do that but I'm also sure that if that's what you're proposing as consultant to the state legislature I am dead set against it. I would not want you to hypothecate -- if you have a 12 1/2% royalty, say to somebody that for a given sum of money I'll give you 2% of it. You don't know what

that's going to cost. You know how much you're going to receive in payment but you have no idea of what it will cost you in revenue in the future in view of the uncertainty of future oil prices. You may be giving away the birth right of the state by doing that.

Rep. Warwick: One other question relating to the legislation advocating say a trans Alaska gas line as opposed to a trans Canada line. El Paso has indicated that it wants Alaska's unequivocal support of this line before they invest another I think around \$20 million into engineering design and other related items. Why do you think that they would want Alaska's unequivocal support?

Mr. Lipton: Well if I were contemplating that kind of an expenditure I sure as hell would want it too. And I think Arctic Gas, if they sensed the tone of this legislature and they thought they had any chance of getting it they would ask you for it too.

Rep. Warwick: How does it benefit them?

Mr. Lipton: Well I think it's one more item that they can throw on the table when they make their submissions to the Federal Power Commission. Incidentally, I might mention that the first submission on a gas pipeline will be made not to the Federal Power Commission, it will be made to the Canadian National Energy Board by the Arctic Gas group probably this month. This is in connection with the gas pipeline down from Mackenzie. Now they of course are going to have to say an awful lot of things about Alaskan gas and if they had the resolution of the Alaska

State Legislature that it was in the interests of Alaska to have the gas line go through Canada and tie in with Mackenzie Delta, boy they would be down here urging you to pass that resolution so that they could lay it before the National Energy Board. But I think that they are intelligent enough to know that they couldn't get that kind of a resolution from you. El Paso hopes that they can get that kind of a resolution from you in their behalf. It's a value to them in their representations and submission to the Federal Power Commission.

Rep. Warwick: I think most of here have come to a preliminary conclusion at least that -- or I should say on face value that the trans Alaska line appears to be much more attractive than a trans Canada line. What would you suggest that we do? A gas resolution qualifying . . .

Mr. Lipton: I hope that there's nothing I've said which implies that we think that the El Paso trans Alaska gas line ought not to be supported. What I'm saying is that I don't think that there's enough evidence available to you on balance as to all of the implications of it, including incidentally the relations between the United States and Canada and so on. Maybe later on before the committees we can talk about all of the Canadian implications and whether or not Canada is a security risk compared to other sources of gas. All I said was that I don't think at this stage of the pipeline development activity that the legislature of Alaska should commit itself without equivocation

to complete support to one project or the other. It's perfectly permissible for you and I think it may be of value in saying that from the standpoint of the interests of Alaska this is what a trans Alaska pipeline would mean to us. That part of it is all right. You're talking to the specifics of Alaska's interest in that kind of a pipeline but you're not saying and I think it would be very presumptuous, and you may want to recant it later on I don't know, I'm not saying that you will, but I think there is not enough evidence laid before this legislature by either of the pipeline groups to be able to make a judgment that, aside from the obvious interests of Alaska, that the total balance of consideration says that Alaska should support one pipeline as compared to the other wholeheartedly. Let's wait and see how much more is thrown on the table before you make that final commitment. But there's nothing wrong with saying that as of today in terms of construction and employment, in terms of the possible use within the State of Alaska of royalty gas, possibly, but I have qualifications on that, the low cost gas that would be available in the state for all of these reasons Alaska feels that there is a case to be made for a trans Alaska gas pipeline. But that's not the same thing as saying that we have weighed everything -- because what you have laid before you I submit is less than the whole that will come out in due course. Give yourself every opportunity to listen to it. I think you lose nothing by it.

Rep. Warwick: As far as the FPC is concerned there's a sense of urgency on the part of the state to pass a resolution unequivocally endorsing a trans Alaska line?

Mr. Lipton: I don't think so. The question is whether it is absolutely necessary to El Paso and I can't speak for that. But I would hate to think that a \$3 1/2 billion investment in a gas pipeline, in liquifaction facilities, in liquified natural gas tankers, and in gasification plants in California -- all of this hinges on whether or not this legislature passes a resolution of unequivocal support. If that's the case I wonder really about the project. I just can't believe that anything of that enormity depends upon whether or not you give unequivocal support. And again let me hasten to say that I'm not being negative. What I'm saying is, give yourselves time to see all of the evidence.

Rep. Warwick: I seem to recall, probably three years ago, when, well four years ago now, when I first came to the legislature, that you and Mr. Levy indicated that -- we were talking about a trans Alaska gas pipeline at the time. You seemed to indicate that at the time you thought the economics of it precluded it. Do you still feel that way or do you have any comments. . .

Mr. Lipton: I don't recall to what extent we spoke to that point but if we did we did it on the basis of what are normally the transportation costs involving moving gas over water and so on but I don't think that we wanted to be definitive about the whole thing. Look, if two or three years ago we were unable to estimate -- we, the world, including the members of Alyeska, were unable to estimate within 150% what the cost of an oil pipeline was going to be, how closely do you think that at this stage in the game anybody can estimate what the cost of an El Paso or a gas Arctic project are. Do you remember what the first figures were on the cost of the Alyeska gas pipeline? moving 200 million barrels a day? and what they are today? Now if -- and incidentally this didn't involve the added complications of the tankers which incidentally are presumed to be later to what we have and which involve contracting for their construction -- El Paso has some experience in the run up, unexpected run up of costs involving the transportation of liquefied natural gas from another source of supply. In view of all of these to talk today on the basis of representations that are made to the legislature that this transportation cost is better than the other transportation cost within 5 and 10¢ per mcf, I would rather wait and see on that as to what kind of evidence is laid down before the Federal Power Commission, where incidentally there will be interveners in the

right of a very careful look at everything which is submitted.

McGill: If there are no more questions, thank you Mr.

Lipton. Meeting is adjourned.

STATE OF ALASKA
THE LEGISLATURE
LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS AGENCY

POUCH Y - STATE CAPITOL
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801

October 31, 1973

The attached transcript contains the remarks made by Mr. Milton Lipton on October 22, 1973 before the Senate Resources Committee. It is a verbatim transcript of Mr. Lipton's remarks. There is occasionally a word missing or other minor gaps in certain places, which are due to the speaker's testimony being indecipherable at that point. However, it is believed that these occasions are rare and the transcript presents a fair picture of the thoughts expressed by the witness before the committee.

Senator John Sackett
Chairman
Resources Committee

Legislative Reference Library
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Juneau, Alaska 99811

SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE
Special Legislative Session

October 20, 1973

Mr. Lipton

I'll try to get my introductory remarks to the point of the issues which you are considering here with respect to the legislation submitted by the Governor. First of all it is very obvious that there is considerable urgency in getting on with the construction of the pipeline. This is clearly evidenced by Congressional action to authorize construction. And I think the action by Congress implies not only an appreciation of the heightened concern by the nation as a whole for the potential contribution of North Slope oil to the nation's precarious balance in essential energy supplies, but also a feeling that it is imperative at this stage to avoid further unnecessary delays on account of litigation in the courts. And I think that the same spirit, the desire to avoid unnecessary delays, is reflected in the negotiations between the Governor and the companies. There is no doubt but that the State and the companies have a very common interest at least in getting on with the job.

You must independently review the proposed legislation in the light of the many issues involved so in my introductory remarks I would like to address myself to the question - what have been the major concerns which have impelled past legislation, to what extent are these concerns still relevant to the State of Alaska, and to what extent do the proposed changes in the legislation adequately take care of the concerns of the State and to what extent may you want to consider variations, deviations, or at least review what is being proposed:

The first thing that I would like to stress is the public interest that is inevitably and irrevocably involved in the pipeline. This is a circumstance which is unique to Alaska, it is of tremendous importance to Alaska and it just does not obtain elsewhere. This is one of the reasons why in your legislation you must be circumspect to a degree that perhaps other states need not be. The contrast between the pipeline that is proposed to be built along a corridor from the North Slope to Valdez contrasts with any other transportation circumstances in the lower 48 states. There was never a time when it was not possible, quickly and expeditiously, for any crude oil producer having a significant flow of crude oil without access to pipeline capacity to undertake to build a new pipeline. Or for any refinery without access to pipeline that would bring crude oil to

his refinery not to undertake the construction of a pipeline. There is today for example a very serious shortage of pipeline capacity into the Midwest area. CAP line, which until Alyeska was the largest undivided interest crude oil pipeline in the United States is expanding its capacity under different investments by the various companies participating. Its not a proportional expansion of capacity but to reflect their several needs. There are refineries located in the mid-continent area of the United States that have historically drawn their crude supplies from Oklahoma and Kansas where crude production is going down that are prepared to build their own pipeline from the U.S. Gulf area into the mid-continent area. There was a new fairly large capacity pipeline just completed to carry products from the gulf coast area to new consumer markets in the mid-west. So that although individual pipelines have, in a sense, a monopoly over their own rights-of-way and are regulated, the circumstances of investment construction in the lower 48 make it possible for competing or alternative forms of transportation to be provided. This is simply not the case with respect to the crude oil resources of the North Slope and the access to export markets in southern Alaska. That pipeline corridor will convey to whatever company builds that pipeline an

an irrevocable right for the transportation of crude oil. The state has tremendous interest in this pipeline. It has interest in seeing that the facilities are operated in the most economical, efficient fashion. That the facilities, whatever their capacity, may in due course be expanded to meet the needs either of incoming production or facilities provided to expand the delivery of crude oil, for example, to intermediate points within the State, such as Fairbanks. My point simply is that company interests may not always correspond in toto, or at a moment in time to the concerns that are of primary interest to the State.

I had the privilege of listening to Mr. Spahr's testimony before this Committee yesterday afternoon and I was quite impressed with his very careful and precise statement of how a company balances all of its investment decisions against their many alternatives, which means in effect that the economic interests of the State, from time to time and in various respects may not coincide with the inclinations of the individual companies who are participants in the pipeline.

There is no way in which the State, through its regulatory machinery, can impose arbitrary or capricious demands upon the pipeline, either to deny them the right to do things or to compel them to do things, because the pipeline always has recourse to the state courts, under the due process of law, against capricious, arbitrary or confiscatory demands

made by a regulatory authority. There is likely to be a wide range of business transacted by that pipeline which involves intra-state commerce and which involves State interest in the totality of its commerce. And, to the extent that the State has an interest and can exercise jurisdiction, it would seem to us that the legislation enacted by this legislature should claim for the State such jurisdiction, subject both to the prior jurisdiction that the ICC may have, and subject also to court review of how the State exercises such jurisdiction as is available to it. But, I would not think that the claim by the State, in its legislation, to exercise regulatory jurisdiction, should be such a disabling factor that in advance they would say that we will not submit to the legislative exercise of this power and go ahead with the construction of our pipeline unless it has been previously reviewed in the courts. The exercise of the State regulatory authority is always available to them subject to judicial review. I would not think that this one, among the many issues would be the one that would be such a stickler that it would involve prior litigation and unnecessary delays on the subject of the construction of the pipeline. This bears upon aspects both in the proposed amendments to the Pipeline Commission Act and certain proposed amendments in the Right-Of-Way Act.

The second overwhelming interest of the State I think is in the tariff which the pipeline will eventually establish.

The estimated costs of the pipeline goes up by leaps and bounds. The figure that is now being used in the range of 4 - 4 1/2 billion dollars which makes it both an incredible industrial undertaking and private investment. But it ought to be seen in context. There has been over the past three years, according to estimates, an increase of 3 billion dollars in the construction costs of the pipeline. On the other hand, the increase in wellhead values in Alaska, as measured only by the increase in postings already put into effect in California, are on the order of 60¢ a barrel, and 60¢ a barrel on 10 billion barrels of recoverable oil, means at least that the capital assets which underlie all of the incentives to construct this pipeline have gone up by about 6 billion dollars in the same period of time. Insofar as the economics of the pipeline are irrevocably tied in with the economics of crude oil production, the increase in the construction costs of the pipeline, occasioned by inflation, environmental considerations, regulation, etc. are not disproportionate to the tremendous increases in the value of Alaskan oil, which have already obtained by virtue of the run up in energy prices and crude oil values in California, and also with respect to foreign oil at the price which it can be

brought into the United States.

These higher wellhead values, reflecting world oil prices, are no reason for the legislature to have less concern than before about the relationship between a pipeline tariff and a wellhead price at which their severance tax and royalties are assessed. The mere fact that the oil is worth more is no reason for you not to insist that the maximum worth accrues to the State, and that it not be unnecessarily depressed, even if its depressed from an unexpectedly high level by virtue of the tariff which is established on the pipeline.

It is not the issue that one questions the good will or the economics of the company. The real question has to do with how the State, given its economic interest, exercises its responsible legislative authority to protect the interests of the State in the event that company interests, for one reason or another, are found in such a way that the State feels its own interests are being bypassed. It is for that reason that we have felt very strongly that the State should be looking at a package of legislative means that not necessarily by themselves but together, would always conduce to the most favorable tariff, in light of the States economic interest.

One of the specific issues involved is one that came to the fore in the Right-Of-Way Leasing Act of 1972 was the percentage lease rental and the many provisions associated with it. If you recall our testimony last year, this was

one area in which we had certain reservations. It certainly was, to our mind, an imaginative approach on the part of the State, since the main intent and purpose of the percentage lease rental formula was not to raise revenue for the State. Quite the contrary, the intent and purpose was to hold out an alternative of pains or rewards to the pipeline participating companies. Pains in the form of a very high lease rental if they set too high a tariff, and rewards in the form of an appreciably lower lease rental if they set the lower tariff. We had however, considerable uncertainty as to what the company response would be to it. It was then very, very difficult and it remains very, very difficult to compute, company by company, the way in which the impact of the percentage lease rental would fall upon the company, not knowing in advance what the ultimate proportions would be between a company's equity in the pipeline and a company's equity in the crude oil, that is whether they were a net buyer or a net seller. And not knowing what the tax exposure was of individual companies with respect to income earned on production, which has the advantage of depletion allowance and the disadvantage of severance tax royalty, or what their income tax exposure might be on pipeline operations given accelerated amortization, investment tax credits, etc. This is a very difficult corporate computation. So there was considerable uncertainty as to whether the incentive that was intended in the percentage lease rental would actually

work.

Then there was the second problem about the pyramiding of lease rentals. Any rental payment that a pipeline company makes, insofar as it is subject to ICC jurisdiction and insofar as it sets its tariffs subject to the Icc rate making rule, if it pays a rental it is in effect able to recover that rental payment through the tariff. So that the higher the rentals are the higher the tariff would have to be.

Third there was the legal issue, and I think that, under the circumstances, where this has been made by the industry, one of the pivotal issues in their litigation I suspect that the legislature would want to consider very very carefully the extent to which the percentage lease rental formula and all the provisions associated with it are essential to the interests of the State or whether there are other alternatives.

The second innovation that was introduced in the legislature last year and is now subject for your review, is the option of the State to buy up to 20% equity in the pipeline. Last year we were rather negative on the subject of 100% state ownership for reason which we would still enunciate. But we did feel that there was a very cogent reason for the State to have an option to buy a participation in the pipeline. In due course. What we had recommended, and what was enacted into your legislation last year, was an option to acquire up

to a 20% undivided interest in the pipeline. The reasons for that were, if the State exercised its option, it could use its ownership of some percentage, and it does not have to be a very large percentage, it could be less than 20%, to utilize its ownership of transportation facilities to leverage all tariffs downward. The State could set a tariff and say that this is an appropriate yardstick that others can follow. Or the State could set a tariff and if the tariff were lower than the company's tariff presumably all shippers would elect first to move their oil where the transportation charge is least, and on that basis the State would be in a position, with its relatively lower tariffs, to say that this is what determines the value of oil on the North Slope, and use that as the basis for its severance tax and royalty calculations, with the onus being on the company to prove that a higher tariff is necessary. Or if all else fail alternatively for the State to say we too will charge a high tariff and in effect we will recover in the profit on the oil that we move through our share of the pipeline what we may have lost through severance tax and royalty revenues because a high tariff depresses the value of the oil on the North Slope.

The attractiveness of the option provision was that having the option it would not have to be exercised.

That what the State could do by its option, plus what it might do through its taxing authority, that all of these would be conducive to a reasonable agreement between the companies and the State as to what a reasonable tariff would be, which might very well be at an ICC rate, depending on what ICC rate making policy is in 1977 and 1978. Or it might be somewhat lower, but at least it provides the State with a negotiating leverage and it would be one of those tools which hopefully the State would never have to exercise. The negotiations between the Governor and the industry have changes quite substantially the whole concept of the State's right to acquire an interest in the pipeline. Last year the company representatives were absolutely adamant that State ownership or State participation or State option were absolutely unacceptable and this was very largely couched in terms of the financing problems that would be posed.

I would like to call attention to arrangements that have been made elsewhere which involve government participation in a pipeline and a government option to buy. I'm referring now to an arrangement which has been made between a consortium of oil companies called SINCRUDE and the Province of Alberta in Canada having to do with the right to produce and transport a synthetic oil processed from the tar sands of the Athabaskan tar belt. Will have to be a pipeline which connects the Athabaskan Tar Sands Development

Project with the City of Edmonton where the oil will then move into other pipelines. The Province of Alberta is given, de nova, from start, an 80% equity in the pipeline. The companies which are participants in SINCRUDE commit their shares of the oil to that pipeline, without reservation. Secondly, and this does not have to do with pipeline but it has to do with an option, the Province of Alberta has an option to acquire, after the start of production, an undivided interest in the production itself, of not less than 5% and not more than 20%, with a formula that determines in advance what price will be paid by the Province of Alberta for the acquiring of that option.

I must be very careful to distinguish between the magnitude of what is involved here. The Alyeska Pipeline with an investment of some 4 - 4 1/2 billion dollars is a much larger pipeline facility than either the Athabaskan pipeline or even the producing operations. There are differences in the magnitudes and degrees, but surely the principle of a definite participation in the pipeline, or the option to acquire a participation is not without precedent. If there are problems involved in the financing of the pipeline because there is an outstanding option for the State to acquire it, I would believe that those financing problems could be resolved if the terms and conditions of acquisition

under the option were spelled out. That is to say their investment, their costs, plus interest on their investment up to the time of the States taking over the pipeline, will be paid to them, and that the State thereafter undertakes commensurate obligations for whatever the outstanding debt may be.

The principle of an option to buy is not without precedent. This consortium of oil companies, who together constitute the SINCRUDE group, contains within their membership of four, two; the Exxon Corporation, through Imperial Oil in Canada, and Atlantic Richfield, who are major participants in the Alyeska Pipeline. So that insofar as the purpose of an option still commends itself to the Legislature as a significant factor in the protection of the State interest, which probably may never be exercised but which nonetheless represents a prudent approach by the Legislature. I think it may also be considered that the precedents which have been transpired, and if necessary, agreement by the State in advance on what the formula for payment will be, so that it is carefully spelled out, I would think that at that stage of the game it should not be a completely inhibiting factor with respect to the financing of the pipeline.

The third broad area at issues has to do with taxation. Obviously the taxing power of the State is the ultimate power. that the Legislature exercises with respect to any of the

issues which may be involved with respect to Alaskan oil.

There is now tabled before you two major tax measures, an ad valorem property tax and an amendment to the severance tax. No legislature can bind itself through its term of office, let alone bind future legislatures, so whatever is enacted in terms of tax legislation is susceptible to amendment at any time. Certainly an oil company, more than any company in the world, is aware of the taxing power of sovereign states or States. In the context of the package of legislation that is submitted to you, it would appear that any tax legislation that you enact in this Special Session of the Legislature, implies some kind of a commitment. Here there have been negotiations, tax proposals have been made, in a special session of the Legislature you are being asked to amend or pass legislation which seems to be part and parcel of a whole package of legislative items, and certainly the industry, no matter how much it feels is subject to amendment in the future, will not be remiss in recalling to this or subsequent legislatures, that what you enact today was part of a package.

Therefore it seems to me that this particular legislature ought to be especially careful in what it does in terms of their tax decisions, and certainly the legislative record ought to show that a present enactment represents the sense of the Legislature to the extent that it is able to look ahead and see the circumstances under which the tax will be

operative. From the visibility of today, I submit that 1977 and 1978 might not look at all the way you or I think its going to look with respect to the economics of North Slope production or the economics of exploration and development elsewhere in the State. So in a sense, if you are enacting tax legislation today, you must also be alert to the fact that the interests that the State will be looking at 3 - 4 - 5 years hence may appear very differently than the best perspective any of us can hope to have on the future from today. So that the tax legislation will be subject to review, not only as a matter of legislative prerogative, but also as a matter of very basic equity as circumstances may be changing.

There are three categories of taxation which are relevant to you: Legislature.

(1) The first is a severance tax with amendments set before you. We have always looked on the severance tax as a tax which captures for the State a portion of the economic interest in its natural resource, and which was sufficiently broad guaged so that it really wasn't directed to the production of one specific company or the production of any specific _____. Two to three years ago we felt that what the legislature did ought not to be constrained by the particular circumstances of Cook Inlet at that time, nor ought to be so flamboyant that it was directed entirely to the hectic

expectations of North Slope development, but that in a sense it represented a fair and equitable tax given the circumstances of current, prospective and future production out of Alaska. Out of that came your tax which was the percentage of wellhead value and which contained four different brackets which related to average wellhead activity.

Last year your severance tax underwent substantial change with the introduction of cents per barrel which was designed as a floor below which the State's revenue would not fall whatever transpired with respect to wellhead value of the oil.

There are two different ways of looking at the cents per barrel aspect of the severance tax. One is as a means of offsetting depressed wellhead values. That is to say, if the pipeline tariff is high and the wellhead value is depressed, then if you can't get it as a percentage of wellhead value then you get it as cents per barrel. It is a response to what you might have considered an unjustifiably high tariff which depressed wellhead value and hence your severance tax. Of course you can get that also by changing your schedule in percentage of wellhead values. But as an offset to cents per barrel, or the severance tax however its enacted, as an offset to the lowering of wellhead values through the high tariff, it is a blunt instrument because it affects every producer in the State with higher severance tax obligations irrespective of whether or not that producer is a member of the pipeline or not.

As a revenue measure, every severance tax bears on producing profits. But it bears on it indirectly, that is to say it is a percentage of gross value. And as a revenue measure it comes out of producing profits, but it can be a different proportion of producing profits depending upon the relationship of individual fields and individual companies and individual circumstances, of the relationship between gross value and net value of the oil. Therefore it is not an income tax though it does fall upon it. It is a revenue raising measure that is always available to the State and is susceptible to whatever rates the State may want to impose, which the State can adjust whenever it chooses if it is dissatisfied with wellhead values. But this is an economic judgement.

The royalty offset feature in the last amendment of the severance tax was obviously a legal issue of considerable general concern to the industry. Because what it implied to the industry was that here in Alaska, and potentially elsewhere, royalty payments which they entered upon by virtue of contractual lease arrangements, might in effect be changed by the State enactment of severance tax legislation.

You can of course achieve whatever level of tax income from the State directly for severance tax or even higher severance tax to offset what you consider to be a loss of royalty income, not by a royalty offset but simply by a high

severance tax.

The legal attack upon your last severance tax enactment could be voided by a very simple amendment, that is to simply eliminate the royalty offset and leave all the old schedule, in which case the industry would be paying a very considerably higher severance tax than they paid under their old tax or they are paying under the governments proposed legislation. To avoid the legal issue of the royalty offset is something I think well worth considering, because you can exercise your severance taxing power at any time.

(2) The ad valorem tax is very clearly to raise revenue for the State and particularly as an interim source of revenue and is one among various ones that you might consider. The only thing that I would like to mention about it is the observation that an ad valorem tax imposed upon a pipeline is recoverable by its tariff. It is a cost of doing business by the pipeline and under ICC regulations, and I suspect under your own State of Alaska Public Utility regulations, an ad valorem tax becomes a cost of doing business and therefore can be added onto the tariff.

By way of rough calculation, on a 4 1/2 billion barrel pipeline a 20 mill rate would yield about 90 million dollars per year in tax revenue ad valorem tax on the pipeline itself, which in effect would mean about 20¢ per barrel addition to the tariff. The ad valorem tax would be passed on to someone else in the tariff of the pipeline. Insofar as the pipeline

tariff is higher and the wellhead values are lower, the State itself would bear 20% of the burden of the tax because it would reduce the royalty severance tax income. The tax would become a burden on those producers on the North Slope who are not participants in the pipeline but who have to transport oil because the tariffs to them will be higher. They would bear a portion of the burden in proportion to the amount of oil that they produce and ship relative to the amount of oil that is produced and shipped by companies who are also participants in the pipeline. The rest of it would be borne by the pipeline companies themselves as its passed back to the cost of transportation of their own crude oil.

The same holds true not only for the ad valorem taxes that the pipeline will pay in 1978 when the pipeline is in operation, but I suspect that the same thing holds true for all the cumulative ad valorem taxes that the pipeline will be paying between 1974 and the start up of operations, because those taxes are also recoverable costs of doing business and in due course will have to the companies as pipeline operators in their tariff.

All of which is not a reason in and of itself for you to say no more ad valorem tax. This all depends on when you want your revenues and how you best decide the State can raise its revenues.

(3) Finally, a few words about what I think is the most important aspect of taxation which is available to the State, that is your State income tax.

I think the Legislature, in due course, its certainly not required at this Special Session of the Legislature, must review its legislation to insure that incomes earned in the State are within reach of the State's income taxing power. This does not imply anything about the way you levy income tax, or whether there are any changes, but it does imply that you will scrutinize your income tax legislation very carefully.

In the end the income taxing power of the State is the means by which the State can insure that there is in the future a reasonable partition, or sharing, of what are the ultimate economic benefits of resource production in the State. I'm not only talking about crude oil but I'm talking about what hopefully will be a major exploratory and development program now that lands are beginning to be available for the reopening of leasing operations. Through your income taxing power you have the final means by which the State can decide, but not arbitrarily, never by itself, because its all subject to the essential incentives of investment by private companies in exploration and development. But within these limits the State has a means to participate in a reasonable and equitable way in the benefits that will come from Alaskan resource development.

SENATE RESOURCES COMMITTEE

October 22, 1973 Hearing

TESTIMONY OF MR. MILTON LIPTON

The legislation that's directly before you is the Right of Way Leasing Act but before I address myself to that specifically, I would like to say something about the entire package of legislation. It has been stated by industry, of course, that it is a package and they will review whatever decisions come out of the Legislature as a whole. I think it's true even more so for the state than for industry that the whole complex of oil legislation that's before you determines the extent to which the interests of the state are protected or the extent to which the interests of the state are yielded.

I don't want to take too much time on other aspects of it and get to the Right of Way Leasing Act as quickly as possible. So let me start out by saying that, in our opinion, having looked at all the legislation carefully, having listened to a great deal of the testimony that was made before the various committees, we now feel that the pivotal piece of legislation which determines the extent to which any compromise is satisfactory to the interest of the state, is the Alaska Pipeline Commission Act. This is your regulatory bill, a strong bill that was enacted in the 1972 session of the legislature, a bill for which the government and industry have submitted proposed amendments which largely convert what had been intended by the legislature in the first instance as a regulatory bill into an entirely different instrument for

the state, namely a device whereby a commission of the state simply represents the state in hearings before the Interstate Commerce Commission. The amendment to the bill as proposed and as pointed out by Professor Witherspoon yesterday afternoon, in effect, specifically denies (if the amendment is passed) by act of the Alaska legislature any and all jurisdiction which the state of Alaska might in the normal course of events, exercise over pipeline activities in this state, if only a pipeline such as transAlaska subjects itself to or is subjected to the jurisdiction of the ICC.

Now let me explain the reasons for our thinking that this particular act, as it now stands, the Alaska Pipeline Commission, is one of the most important tools available to the state of Alaska in protecting its interest. First of all, the act that's on the books claims very extensive jurisdiction for the pipeline commission which is being established. The jurisdiction extends to various aspects of regulation extensions of services, connections, expansion of capacity, potential abandonments --- so that with respect to these various aspects of pipeline operations the state of Alaska claims jurisdiction for its pipeline commission. Secondly, it vests in this pipeline commission wide authority to pass upon the validity of tariffs which are set by the pipeline. There is no claim made in the existing act, which is on your books, that the state of Alaska can regulate tariffs for the movement of oil in interstate commerce. This falls within the jurisdiction of the ICC. But there will undoubtedly be movement of oil in intrastate commerce, as for example from the northslope

to Fairbanks. There will probably be movement of oil in intrastate commerce from the north slope to Valdez which will remain within the state, for example, if the state should contract to take royalty oil and sell it for a year or two years or five years to the Tesoro Refinery or any other refinery which may be then or in the future be constructed within the state. So the state need only claim jurisdiction over the operations of the pipeline which affect intrastate commerce and jurisdiction over tariffs which involve the movement of oil in intrastate commerce.

Now what's the value of this? Insofar as there may be in the future an issue over the tariff set by the pipeline and this has been pivotal to your deliberations for two years now, insofar as there should be an issue over the tariff, there has really to be two things -- one, a determination as to what the appropriate tariff is, and secondly, a decision by the state as to what it will do to try to enforce what it believes is an appropriate tariff. How does one go about determining what is an appropriate tariff for the pipeline? I don't believe that the legislature in its deliberation is going to want to tackle the job -- that fantastically difficult and complicated job -- of determining what is fair value on a pipeline -- what goes into the capital base and what is not allowed in the capital base, and of what rate of depreciation is appropriate, and everything else --. Or what is a fair return -- this is an incredibly involved problem which the ICC struggles with or avoids by not doing anything about it,

as the case may be. In any case this is really not a problem of the legislature.

But you have established in the existing legislation a pipeline commission which has jurisdiction to determine the fairness and adequacy of tariffs insofar as it involves intrastate commerce. It would do so by holding hearings. If a rate is filed for the intrastate movement of oil, your pipeline commission may accept that rate as it's filed, or it may protest that rate in which case it has administrative processes by which it holds hearings, by which if it renders a decision it must support and justify why that particular decision was issued. And it provides opportunity for the pipeline companies to protest any tariff decision, or any other decision of the pipeline commission, insofar as the pipeline companies believe that it runs counter to due process of law, which means that the administrative decision of your pipeline commission will be tested in your state courts, or if necessary in a federal court.

But if in fact, your own administrative and judicial process has come up with a tariff which is lower than the tariff set by the pipeline companies it can be then enforced upon the intrastate movements, and the legislature and the state of Alaska is in a position to expect that the companies will apply an equivalent tariff to interstate movements also. Now that may not be enforced but I put it to you that on the day that it is determined by the state of Alaska, through its administrative and judicial processes, that a tariff is appropriate

for the intrastate movement of oil from the north slope to Valdez -- if on that day the companies refuse to reduce the tariff, which means to increase the well head value on all the oil that moves in interstate commerce, then the problem of the legislature in recapturing the interest of the state is a simple one, at that point you have the taxing power and know exactly at what level and what rate to exercise it, because you have through the instrumentalities of your own legislation already created the means and device by which an appropriate tariff can be determined; by which your own courts will reject the findings of the pipeline commission if they are arbitrary, confiscatory or capricious, but if administratively and judiciously that tariff is upheld, then the legislature has the guidelines precisely how to go about recapturing the interest in the state through its incontrovertible sovereign powers - that is to say the power of taxation.

It's for this reason that we feel the regulatory bill is absolutely the heart of the entire package. Furthermore, it is our feeling, and here of course it's difficult to speak for companies because, as they said, they would go back and review the whole package, but insofar as the companies feel that there is a claim of jurisdiction by the state which is unconstitutional because it involves interstate commerce or insofar as they feel that there's a decision by your pipeline commission in an area where it has jurisdiction but which decision goes against the law because it violates due process, they always have recourse to the courts. They need not litigate this issue in

advance because the mere fact that this law is on your statute books and I'm referring to the 1972 pipeline commission act, the mere fact that this law is on the statute books does not impose in advance the kind of disabilities upon their intentions to construct the pipeline that will require extensive litigation at this state of the game. Furthermore, as we have pointed out at the previous sessions of the legislature where regulatory bills were before you, there is legislation to this effect on the books of other major producing states and these have never involved extensive constitutional issues so far as we know. Well then, this pipeline commission act we feel is the guts of any compromise which the legislature may wish to substitute in lieu of the compromise package which has been put before you by the executive department.

Now let me pass on then to the Right of Way, but before I do, let me say a few words about the other bills and then come to the guts of the legislation which is before you which is the Right of Way Leasing Act. There are three different tax measures before you and I don't believe that any of them are in any respect crucial to the willingness of the companies to abandoning litigation or to going ahead with the construction of the pipeline. The severance tax, of course is in the course of litigation and it's in course of litigation because the 1972 amendment to your severance tax law contains a royalty credit feature which the companies feel would establish a very unacceptable precedent if it were, first of all applied here, and secondly if it were emulated in other states. I think they're misguided in their concerns; I think the state of Alaska has very little interest, really, in maintaining the

royalty offset provision. It's applied actually by the state of Alaska in a very generous way so that the relatively high cents per barrel tax, which was imposed in your 72 legislation is evaded and reduced by virtue of the royalty credit. You could settle the legal issue in five minutes by repealing the royalty credit and leaving everything else stand, in which case the companies would be subjected to considerably higher taxation than they were previously and that they are in the governor's proposal. So that the removal of the royalty credit feature in your severance tax which the companies are so eager to obtain, we would surely recommend that the legislature give to them. Perhaps the easiest way of doing it is to give it to them by accepting the severance tax amendment which is before you. But I caution one thing: I don't believe that this is the time for the Alaskan legislature to enact a severance tax schedule, whether it's a percent of value at the wellhead or cents per barrel or a combination of both with the idea that what is enacted today is going to be appropriate to whatever the volumes and values of oil may be that are going to be produced in 1977 and 1978. So if you prepare to accept the proposed severance tax amendment as part of a compromise package, I would strongly suggest that it is part of the legislative record in your committee hearings and in your debate that in no sense does this represent a commitment on the part of the legislature that these particular tax rates are the rates which will obtain five and six and seven and eight years from today. We will have time to review that. So that in a sense what you are giving by accepting the proposed amendment to the severance tax is a willingness