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SUPPLEMENT

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SENATE AND HOUSE - SUPPLEMENT NO. 11

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ALASKA CONGRESSMAN NICK BEGICH  
ADDRESS TO JOINT SESSION OF ALASKA  
STATE LEGISLATURE

FEBRUARY 10, 1972

It is a great pleasure for me to return today to the Alaska Legislature. With the perspective of a full year of Congressional service behind me, I realize more than ever before the great responsibility of this body and the value of my own experiences here.

I take quite seriously this opportunity to come before the Legislature, and to continue to build a partnership that must exist in order for Alaska to prosper. A full year has passed since my last occasion to address you, and it seems appropriate to think back, to consider what was said at that time, and to look beyond the words to the actual progress during 1971.

I think it is accurate to say that in the winter of 1970-71, Alaskans were well-conditioned by disappointment. At the time I spoke to the Legislature last February 16th, I limited my remarks to the two issues at the source of that disappointment - the settlement of the Alaska Native Land Claims and the construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline.

Then, it was possible only to speculate on the causes of repeated failures to resolve these issues, and to propose those areas of cooperation between the State of Alaska and its Congressional delegation which would contribute to a winning formula during the 92nd Congress. Among the points discussed at that time were the following:

- That the Land Claims and the Pipeline were intimately related, and that a fair settlement of the claims must precede the pipeline.
- That both issues must be resolved in the spirit of compromise and mediation, considering seriously the issues of the environment, minority rights, and adequate planning. It was a charge both to the State and the delegation to adopt such an approach.
- That the State, through its legislative and executive branches must assume an unprecedented share of the burden, both financially and through deliberative processes, for the resolution of these issues.

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Each of these points was a request for new State responsibility in the partnership which was necessary if the log-jam surrounding these major issues was to be broken. Now, one year later, the Alaska Native Land Claims bill is law, the pipeline project has moved forward, and Alaskans have experienced some good news for the first time in years.

We all wish we could take credit for the good news, but it is my purpose today to tell the joint assembly that my own commendation must go to this body, to Governor Bill Egan, and to the people of the State of Alaska for embracing and carrying out the difficult terms of the partnership. The setting of unselfish priorities, the assumption of objective responsibility, and the financial sacrifice involved, were and are the keys to success in Washington, D.C.

For the land claims settlement, it was crucial that the State make a monetary contribution and participate in the establishment of responsible land-use planning. For the pipeline, it remains crucial that the State continue to develop environmental and economic responsibility. The actions of this Legislature, in creating a new Department of Environment, in establishing a land-use planning body, in voting to share mineral revenues as a part of the claims settlement, and in creating a joint committee to explore new economic possibilities for the pipeline, are all aspects of the overall task. For these, I commend you, and commend Alaskans for their support of you. Do not cease your efforts in this constructive partnership.

The effect of your efforts on the issues of the land claims and the pipeline have been to break new ground in the relationship of Alaska to the Federal government. I am well aware that members of this Legislature need no instruction on this matter, but I must say that, for my own part, this relationship has greatly occupied the first year of my service in Congress. Although we all continue the fight to move the relationship from dependence to partnership, from paternalism to respect, there remains strong evidence of insensitivity in major Federal decisions.

- In a state where the Pacific Rim economy is a part of the future, the new economic foreign policy will take a heavy toll in alienating Japan, Canada, and other nations where Alaskan trade promises to develop;
- In a state where fisheries are the historic and somewhat fragile base for the economy, the new domestic economic policy, with its price controls, will bring special hardships to that industry;
- In a state where Federal spending and Federal employment constitutes an exceptionally large portion of the economy, the impoundment of public works funds, the Federal job cutbacks, and the Administration's wage controls will bite deeply;

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- In a state with an already threatened fisheries resource, failure to adequately enforce against foreign fishing violations because of the larger concerns of foreign policy will result in unfair sacrifices by Alaska fishermen.

Obviously, the list could continue, but the point is that large Federal decisions are still being made without considering special, and valid, Alaska circumstances. It is a task for us all to continue to overcome this pattern, and I suggest that the strategy of the land claims is a valid one.

The events of 1971 have already merged into those of 1972, and undiminished effort is required of each one of us. I would like to briefly review some of the issues and events on which we will be working together this year.

At the top of the list is the implementation of the land claims settlement. Immediately confronting us are the problems of establishing the basic mechanisms of the new law and appropriating the initial funds, totalling in excess of twelve million dollars. Close behind will be the problems of making adjustments in local government systems to accommodate the settlement, of undertaking responsible land-use planning and land selection, and integrating a significant new element into the life style of the State.

By now, it is a cliché to call the Native Land Claims bill a "Second Statehood Act," but as a symbol of new beginning and as a test for our mutual spirit of cooperation and enterprise, it compares with the attainment of Statehood. I believe we should treat it in that spirit.

The pipeline continues to be a difficult and ever-expanding issue. After the most recent delay, it appears that it will be at least mid-March before the Interior Department is even prepared to file the environmental impact statement with the Council on Environmental Quality. After 30 days of review there, an Administration decision on the permit will be possible, and any judicial action will follow thereafter. Judicial proceedings may well extend into the Fall of 1972.

I have followed and participated throughout the permit process. I have shared the disappointment of delay with all of you. I have insisted on the formation of a strong document to support a permit and to withstand a court test. At this point, I feel confident in saying that this will be the most thoroughly researched project of its kind in history.

To predict the Administration's decision or the will of the courts asks too much, but I believe that the chances for favorable action on a reasonable and fair permit will continue to be enhanced by my own scrutiny of the project, and the continued investigation of the State into better methods of accomplishing the goal and enhancing the entire pipeline proposal.

Another expectation for 1972 and the following years relates to the problems Alaska may begin to experience in commanding large portions of the Federal budget. Already, I sense the growth of an informal sanction against Alaska projects as a reaction to what is seen to be Alaska's new oil and land claims wealth.

Although it is true that the total Federal expenditures for Alaska increased from \$760 million in F.Y. 1970 to \$845 million in F.Y. 1971, this increase does not reflect either the real trend or a series of more indicative events.

In 1971, Alaska lost the Federal Field Committee; it lost Department of Transportation offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks; it lost mail service in many rural areas; it lost the services of land adjudicators in Fairbanks; it lost a Small Business Administration Office in Juneau; it lost an adequate budget to properly handle veteran's benefits; it lost funds for the Arctic Health Research Laboratories; and it lost an important segment of the Naval installation in Kodiak. In addition, there are those in the Administration and in Congress who believe that the land claims settlement also extinguished large segments of the Federal government's economic and social responsibility in rural Alaska.

These are disturbing indicators in the state-federal relationship for Alaska, and reversing these losses will be important in the coming year. It will be my major purpose to convince the Administration that a policy of phasing out Federal services to Alaska is unwise both for the state and the Nation.

I raise this series of points neither to dwell on nor to exaggerate. It is a pattern to be watched, and to be resisted and reversed. Still, I prefer to deal in optimism, and in spite of some disappointments, the coming year is as bright as any the State of Alaska has anticipated for some time.

The Economic Development Act has been extended; the Fairbanks Flood Control project worth \$100 million will begin, and Federal emergency employment legislation will begin to operate. Work on all of these was done substantially in the House Public Works Committee.

Only a few days ago, the House Education and Labor Committee reported out a bill to settle the West Coast dock strike, and included a special protective provision for Alaska. The good news of the strike settlement made the legislation unnecessary, but it was a fine victory for Alaska at a time of real hardship, and a good sign for the future.

Also underway is the Congressional implementation of the Report of the Public Land Law Review Commission. Although it is not yet certain that this task can be completed during the 92nd Congress, it is clear that Alaska's stake in the outcome is vital. One year ago, slightly over 100 million acres of Alaska's

land had been spoken for either by the State, by private owners, or by Federal classification. By the end of 1972, after Native selections, new state selection, and new Federal classifications, this figure could increase to nearly 250 million acres. In a short period of time, the face of the State will change.

I also expect that the issue of foreign fishing violations will be brought to the forefront. My own continuing demands are simple and straightforward. First, the Administration owes Alaska and its fishermen a clear explanation of its policy. Second, if the policy is for firm protection, then enforcement and prosecution capability must be radically increased. If the policy is to place foreign relations considerations first, then Alaskan fishermen must receive alternative compensation for their sacrifice to such a policy. The counsel of this body is essential on this issue.

In the area of transportation, I anticipate that the Civil Aeronautics Board Alaska Service Investigation will continue to be a source of controversy. It is clear that the policy of the Civil Aeronautics Board is related to efficiency and subsidy reduction, while increased frequency and alternative schedules are the needs in a state which is dependent on air transportation.

In the same area, and with the continuing assistance and cooperation of the Legislature and State Administration, I expect that a bill to temporarily waive the Jones Act and permit full operation of the WICKERSHAM can become law.

At this point, I am certain you realize that this Congressional report card could continue indefinitely. Important developments have occurred and will occur in communications, transportation, government employee's legislation, veteran's affairs, the environment, rural affairs, election reform and a host of other issues. Long-range issues are taking shape in development of the Pacific Rim economy, in international Sub-Arctic planning, in the items for consideration at the 1973 Law of the Sea Conference, and many other exciting areas.

My emphasis for today is more general. We must continue to build the partnership between this Legislature, the State government, and Alaska's Congressional delegation. That relationship having been established, no single issue, or series of issues, can become larger than our mutual ability to reach a solution which will benefit Alaska.

For my part, I stand ready to accept your guidance on those matters of concern which you know best. I am prepared also to offer information and guidance to you on those Federal issues where I need your assistance.

Before coming here today, I considered my remarks made here last year and all the subject areas I have mentioned. In addition, I considered the remarks of others who have returned to address their home legislatures. In one of the most well-known of

these addresses, I found some profound language I would like to share with you today. These remarks, which are so appropriate to the partnership I have proposed and the mutual task we share, were made by the late President John F. Kennedy to the Massachusetts Legislature only days before he became President.

He suggested that the success or failure of legislators might be measured by asking the following questions:

"First, were we truly men of courage - with the courage to stand up to one's enemies - and the courage to stand up, when necessary, to one's associates - the courage to resist public pressure, as well as private greed?

Secondly, were we truly men of judgment - with perceptive judgment of the future as well as the past - of our own mistakes as well as the mistakes of others - with enough wisdom to know what we did not know, and enough candor to admit it?

Third, were we truly men of integrity - men who never ran out on either the principles in which we believed or the men who believed in us - men whom neither financial gain nor political ambition could ever divert from the fulfillment of our sacred trust?

Finally, were we truly men of dedication - with an honor mortgaged to no single individual or group, and compromised of no private obligation or aim, but devoted solely to serving the public good and the national interest?"

These questions are as applicable to Alaska, to myself, and to all of you, and as difficult to live up to, as on the day President Kennedy asked them. Alaska, and all of us here today, have exciting days and hard work ahead. It was my pleasure to be here to share some of my thoughts with you, and I wish you all the best in the days ahead.

# HOUSE JOURNAL

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SEVENTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

Juneau, Alaska

Friday

February 11, 1972

## Thirty-Third Day

Pursuant to adjournment, the House was called to order by Speaker Gene Guess at 9:11 a.m.

Roll call showed all members present except Messrs. Degnan, Holm and Moses. Messrs. Holm and Wright had previously been excused from a call of the House today. Mr. E. Miller moved and asked unanimous consent that Mr. Harris be excused from a call of the House today. There being no objection, it was so ordered. Mr. E. Miller moved and asked unanimous consent that all other absent members be excused on official state business. There being no objection, it was so ordered.

The prayer was offered by the Chaplain, the Reverend Leo McCaffrey.

Mr. Swanson moved and asked unanimous consent that today's prayer be spread in the journal. There being no objection, it was so ordered; the prayer appears as follows:

"Let us pray:

God our Father, we thank You for this place, this land in which we live, not because it is perfect, but because it is free, and because we are free to make of this land what we will.

Here we have our homes; here we share life with those we befriend and love. There can be no more compelling reason for offering thanks to You. And there is no better way of showing our thanks than by sharing our gift of freedom with our fellow man.

Help us, Father, to live out this belief, this dedication to freedom. Help these men and women, these lawmakers, to give us those laws which will enable the people of this state to live as people who are truly free.

Without Your help, Lord, there is no chance for such true exercise of freedom. And so, today, we pause once again to ask for Your help.

Thank You for listening, Lord.

Amen"