

MIKE GRAVEL
ALASKA

GRAVEL

States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20510

July 15, 1980

Dear Colleague:

As you probably know, the Alaska lands bill, H.R.39, is scheduled for consideration by the Senate when we return from recess July 21.

I remain opposed to the bill which was reported by the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee because it fails to accommodate the economic and lifestyle needs of Alaskans as well as the nation. Attached for your information is a copy of my supplemental views on the bill from the Committee Report (No.96-413) which outlines the many specific problems and impacts of the bill as currently drafted.

Under the time agreement for the bill Senator Tsongas, Senator Stevens, Senator Jackson and myself are entitled to offer several amendments. The five which have been printed by Senator Tsongas and others would make many major changes in the Committee's bill and would generally conform it to the House-passed measure. The House measure is totally unacceptable and far exceeds what is reasonable and proper in the protection of Alaska's natural resources. Similarly, the Tsongas amendments, both individually and collectively, would further erode what balance the Senate Committee bill attempts to achieve. I am strongly opposed to the passage of all of the proposed amendments by Senator Tsongas.

I have also attached copies and explanations of two of the three amendments which I intend to introduce. These amendments deal with access & mining provisions, and park/preserve designations. These two amendments, together with two of the three amendments submitted by Senator Stevens which clarify fish and wildlife management authorities and bar future administrative withdrawals and classifications beyond those called for in the legislation, represent the minimum changes necessary to make this legislation meet the needs of the people of my state.

In addition, I intend to propose a third non-controversial amendment which would facilitate certain aspects of the implementation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The language for these provisions is still being worked out among the various parties.

I am also in support of a third amendment submitted by Senator Stevens which would consolidate land ownership patterns in Alaska through a land exchange between the state and federal government.

I should point out that all of Senator Stevens and my amendments alter the bill in relatively minor ways. The major intent of the amendments is to protect existing uses of these lands where uses such as sport hunting and mining on valid claims are occurring. With the exception of a minor boundary adjustment on the proposed Kanuti Wildlife Refuge, no lands would be excluded from conservation systems. On less than 2% of the 105 million acres to be designated under the bill would a particular designation be altered. And in this case the change would be only from "Park" to "Park Preserve" to permit hunting to continue.

I hope you will look over the attached information and give these amendments your support. If you have any questions, please give me or Pat Pourchot of my staff a call.

With warm regards.

Sincerely,



Mike Gravel

MG:pp
Enclosures