Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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Secretary of the Interior Thomas S. Kleppe has notified the Governor of Alaska that the State will be allowed an additional 90 days --until April 1 --to exercise an exclusive preference right to select lands described in Section 11 of the Alaska Native Claims
Settlement Act.

Generally, these Section 11 lands are the 9 townships surrounding Alaska Native Villages. Until October 1, 1976, these lands were held by the Federal Government exclusively for Alaska Natives to make selections.

On October 1, Public Land Order 5561 expired and pursuant to the Alaska Statehood Act the State was entitled to at least 90 days from that expiration date to exclusively exercise its selection entitlement.

Secretary Kleppe's action effectively extends that 90 day period to a total of 180 days. During the 180 days no other selection filed by Alaska Natives will be considered valid if the State selects the same land.

"We have extended the dates for Native selections on two occasions, he said, "and it is only fair to treat the State likewise. After the termination of this extension both the State and the Natives will be on an equal footing in terms of land selection. No further extensions are anticipated."