Indian Affairs - Office of Public Affairs

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The Department of the Interior will conduct a series of hearings in late November and early December on the status of Alaska Natives and the implementation of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971.

Assistant Secretary for Indian Affairs Kenneth L. Smith will preside over hearings at Fairbanks, November 27; Bethel, November 28; and Juneau, November 30.

Deputy under Secretary William P. Horn will conduct hearings in Alaska at Nome, December 3, and Anchorage, December 4.

The purpose of the hearings is to gather views, opinions, information and recommendations to consider in the preparation of a report to Congress, required by the Settlement Act.

A 600-page draft report was sent in August to more than 250 representatives of Native organizations and other interested persons for review and comment.

Assistant Secretary Smith said the "report is of major importance to the Alaska Natives and the State because of its impact on future Congressional actions, including possible modifications of the ANCSA provisions."

Under ANCSA the Alaska Natives received about 44 million acres of land and about $1 billion in exchange for their aboriginal land rights. The act created 13 regional corporations and about 200 village corporations to receive and administer the Native property.

Information about the hearings, including time and place, will be published in the Federal Register and in newspapers throughout Alaska.

Persons wishing to testify and those seeking further information should contact Glen Robertson or Liz Rummell in the Bureau of Indian Affairs area office, Federal Building, Juneau, Alaska 99802 (907/586-7177) or any BIA agency office in Alaska.