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Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton declared today that "God and the courts willing, there will be a trans-Alaska pipeline."

In remarks prepared for delivery in Alaska to the Fairbanks Chamber of Commerce, Secretary Morton emphasized, "We at Interior and in President Nixon IS administration are proud of the conscientious fashion in which the pipeline decision was made."

The proposed 789 mile hot oil pipeline linking the North Slope oil fields to a tanker terminal at Valdez "will mean- unprecedented social and economic change for your State," he said, adding:

"I know that our' decision to proceed with the pipeline is in the best national interests. We have been responsive to national needs for more. Energy; to Alaskans needs for avenues of economic development, and for balanced development of natural resources without jeopardizing the environment."

The Secretary expressed hope that a court decision on a request to lift injunctions prohibiting construction of the pipeline could come before Labor Day. "No matter who wins there, the case undoubtedly will then go to the Court of Appeals. After that it may well go to the Supreme Court," he added. "Consequently this litigation could go for as long as a year or 18 months or even more. We must be candid in our understanding of that. "

The Secretary traced progress in implementing the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, which was signed by President Nixon last December 18.

"The Interior Department has taken decisive actions toward fulfilling the promises of the Statehood Act," he said. We have developed a system for a balanced apportionment of land selection based on the common interests of Alaskans, natives and the American people. "

"We are at the beginning of a new age for Alaska, Secretary Morton added, "an age in which conservation is matched with progress, and in which development is matched with equity."