Media Contact: Office of the Secretary
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Secretary of the Interior Rogers C. B. Morton said today that two sets of documents of major significance to Alaska and to all Americans will be made public within the next 10 days.

On Wednesday, March 15, at 2 p.m., Secretary Morf9n twill hold a general news conference, principally devoted to Interior's action on preliminary set asides of public lands. In Alaska, pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. The news conference will be held in the Interior Department Auditorium on the first floor of the building, at 18th and C Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Informational material describing the action will be made available to working news media personnel beginning at 9 a.m. Wednesday, March 15, in Room 7222 of the Interior Building on an embargoed basis, meaning that no publication or broadcasting of this material is permitted until the news conference begins at 2 p.m. that day.

On Monday, March 20, the Department will make public its Final Environmental Impact Statement on the proposal for a Trans-Alaska Pipeline. Top Departmental officials will conduct a news media briefing in the Interior Auditorium at 2 p.m. Embargoed copies of the nine-volume Environmental Statement, weighing at least 25 pounds per set, will be available on a one-set per publication or broadcast station basis to working news men and women beginning at 9 a.m. the same day in the Auditorium, to allow study of the contents before the briefing.

Secretary Morton emphasized that neither doclJ1llent represents a final decision. Under guidelines of the Council on Environmental Quality, a decision on the pipeline cannot be made until at least 30 days after the Final Environmental Impact Statement is delivered to CEQ, as it will be on March 20. During this period the Secretary intends to confer with others inside and outside government before reaching a decision.

The land withdrawal actions also are preliminary, pending final precise determination of Alaska, Native and State selection, and of Federal land set-aside -- a complex series of procedures expected to extend over a period of years.

Copies of the nine-volume Pipeline Environmental Impact Statement will be available for public inspection in Washington, D. C., and other locations to be announced later.

Copies may be purchased beginning March 2l--at about $40.00 for the full paperback set or $3 for the first volume, which contains the introduction, summary, project description and Interior stipulations from the National Technical Information Center, U.S. Department of Commerce, 5285 Port Royal Road, Springfield, Virginia 22151, telephone (703) 321-8543. Microfiche copies may be purchased for 95 cents per volume.