**Media Contact:** Office of the Secretary
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Acting Secretary of the Interior Kent Frizzell today announced establishment of a thirteenth region for the benefit of Alaska Natives who are not permanent residents of Alaska and who elected to be enrolled in such a region under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Frizzell said the action, which is effective as of October 1, 1975, would result in the transfer of about 4,500 non-resident Alaska Natives from the twelve regional corporations to the thirteenth corporation.

The action was taken pursuant to an order entered on December 30, 1974, by U.S. District Judge Oliver Gasch in a suit filed by the Alaska Native Association of Oregon and the Alaska 'Federation of Natives International, challenging the decision made by the Department of the Interior on November 8, 1973, not to establish a thirteenth region.

Under Frizzell's order those Alaska Natives who are transferred to the thirteenth corporation will receive a pro-rata share of the approximately $1 billion cash settlement provided for in the Act. They will not share in the land selection of 40 million acres of Federally owned land in Alaska awarded the Natives under the Act.

The Alaska Native Claims Act assigned the management of funds and land to 12 regional corporations. The Act proffered a choice for those Alaska Natives who had left the State and resided elsewhere. They could either enroll with one of the twelve regional corporations or they could vote for the establishment of a thirteenth region, with its own corporation. The Act provided that if a majority of the non-resident Natives age 18 or older voted in favor of a thirteenth corporation, it would be established.

The Department's initial tabulation of the vote in the referendum on this question did not show a majority in favor of establishment of a thirteenth region. Judge Gasch ruled, however, that the required majority had actually voted in favor of the region and ordered its establishment for those non-resident Alaska Natives who had earlier elected to be so enrolled.

In an order entered October 6, Judge Gasch directed that not later than October 15, the Secretary of the Interior invite each bona fide organization presently known by the Secretary to represent non-resident Alaska natives to submit not later than November 1 the names of not more than five consenting nominees for election as incorporators and members of the interim board of directors of the thirteenth region.

Acting Secretary Frizzell sent telegrams October 7 asking 17 non-resident Alaska Native associations to provide by October 14 information relating to their eligibility to make nominations.

Under Judge Gasch's October 6 order, the Department will prepare a list of nominees which will be sent to each adult thirteenth region enrollee with instructions to vote for not more than five nominees and to return the ballot by December 1. The results will be tabulated by December 10 and the five nominees receiving the highest number of votes shall be recognized as incorporators for the purpose of preparing and submitting the proposed articles of incorporation and bylaws for the thirteenth region. Those

named will also constitute the initial board of directors of the corporation to serve until the first meeting of shareholders or until their successors are elected and qualify. They will not be eligible to succeed themselves.

The proposed articles of incorporation and bylaws are to be approved by January 1, 1976; the first meeting of the shareholders and election of the board of directors of the corporation is to be held by February 1, 1976; and by February 15, 1976, the corporation is to be paid its share of the monies in the Alaska Native Fund. At the time the regional corporation makes its first distribution of monies to its shareholders, all adult non-resident Native enrollees, whether or not presently enrolled in the thirteenth region, will be given a final opportunity to elect their preference for enrollment in that region or in another region in Alaska.