

Call number: 02-00-61B CD 3

TransAlaska Pipeline Hearings, August 29-30, 1969, Patty Gym-University of Alaska

Summary created by: Jacob Metoxen

Date(s) of creation of summary: 4/15/2013

Notes: Originals on 7 inch reel. Master copy CD.

This is the first recording in a series of recordings about the TransAlaska Pipeline System. A man begins the recording by saying he is a hearing examiner for the BLM, stationed in Salt Lake City, Utah. The hearing has been scheduled to receive statements or views on the proposal of TAPS to construct a petroleum pipeline in Alaska. He would like to introduce the Undersecretary of the Interior. Russell E. Train is introduced as the Undersecretary of the Interior. The public hearings being conducted today have been scheduled by Secretary Hickel to express the broad views on the TAPS project from the North Slope to Valdez. The hearing is designed to apply a mechanism for the free expression of opinions on the overall implications of the proposed right away. In the summer of 1968 the discovery of oil at Prudhoe Bay was announced. Estimates of the magnitude of the discovery vary wildly. Whatever the estimate, there is little question that the North Slope strike represents major international importance. In April of this year, Secretary Hickel created the North Slope Task Force within the Department of the Interior to ensure that oil development in Alaska be consistent with the protection of the environment and with the safeguarding of Native interest. In May, President Nixon enlarged the departmental into an all government group to include the Departments of Defense, Transportation, Commerce, Health Education and Welfare, and Housing and Urban Development. It also includes membership from the National Science Foundation and the Office of Science and Technology. On June 12th, the Department of the Interior received an application from the TransAlaska Pipeline System. TAPS is a consortium of three oil companies for an 800 mile pipeline and associated construction road from Prudhoe Bay on the Beaufort Sea to the Port of Valdez on the Pacific. They were asked to grant the application by the first of July. On July 25th, the department received a request to modify the land freeze along the portion of the intended pipeline route, to allow the construction of a 53 mile secondary highway from Livengood to the Yukon River. Lifting the freeze is a procedure involving the consent of both the Senate and House Interior Committees and consultation from the Federal Power Commission by the first of August. There was success in clearing the request through the House Interior Committee on the 7th of August and through the Senate Committee on the 8th of August and through the Federal Power Commission shortly thereafter. Secretary Hickel signed the order modifying the freeze for the 53 mile highway on the 13th of August. The request for modification by the state of Alaska was approved in 13 working days. He says the Department of the Interior is aware of the magnitude of the North Slope oil discovery. There are no responsible voices suggesting the oil not be developed. The Department of the Interior is just as anxious as the people of Alaska that North Slope Oil get working as soon as possible. At the same time there are responsibilities and duties that cannot be avoided. The department is also aware of the potential impact of large scale technology on the arctic and subarctic environment. As trustees of the public

domain, over which 95 of the pipeline is supposed to be built, it is our responsibility to ensure that the environment and native interest be protected. The concern is not just the safeguarding of the ecosystem. They are convinced that oil development and environmental protection can coexist. He wants to emphasize the magnitude of interest. In addition to the members of the federal task force, there is the personal concern of President Nixon who wishes the oil be developed without construction and minimum damage of the arctic environment. Secretary Hickel has advised Mr. Delaney, Chairman of TAPS, that he could be assured of priority approval of the application when several conditions were met. These included the meeting of law and regulation, the protection of native interest, the safeguarding of environment values, and the establishment of close cooperation with the state of Alaska and bodies of Congress. One of the long standing regulations requires that proposed right away across the public domain are met with sufficient accuracy. At the present time this requirement has not been met. The federal government needs to know where the pumping stations need to go. Legal difficulties are involved in the lands adjacent to Valdez. The resolution of state land selection in that area is delayed by a suit against the state of Alaska and a protest to the secretary of interior. These legal problems must be resolved before action can be taken in that area. Moreover the proposed right away touches upon land under the jurisdiction of the United States forest Service, the Corps of Engineers, the Department of the Air Force as well as lands selected by the state of Alaska. Coordination and agreement must be attained before approval can be granted.

At 12:10 the concern for Native people and the environment are discussed. They were originally drafted by the Department of the Interior in consultation with three departments of the state of Alaska: the Department of Fish and Game, the Department of Natural Resources, and the Department of Highways. The stipulations were then edited and refined by the Department of Interior Officials in Washington, submitted back to industry. Also submitted to Congressional, Native, and state of Alaska representatives for review. He says they have not issued a set of iron-clad stipulations but rather have made available to industry, the state, and other groups a proposed set of stipulations which constructive comments are welcomed. A statement regarding the stipulations by Mr. Reetz from the Department of Fish and Game is read. Mr. Reetz says he feels BLM has done a great job with the stipulations. Secretary Hickel and the committee are dedicated to the idea that the environment and oil are connected. Dr. Leslie Glasgow, Assistant Secretary for Fish, Wildlife, Parks, and Marine Resources, Dr. Bill Pecora, Director of the Geological Survey, Mr. Pat Ryan, Regional Coordinator for the Department of the Interior, Mr. Bert Silcock, Regional Director for the BLM, and Mr. Morris Thompson, Special Assistant to the Secretary of the Interior are all introduced as panel members.

It is announced that Mrs. Pat Kling, a court reporter, is taking a verbatim transcript of the hearings. All matter that is spoken in the hearing room will be recorded by the reporter unless off the record comments are made clear. The hearing is a fact finding proceeding. Witnesses or parties desiring to present their views will not be sworn in or placed under oath. There will be no examination of any of the parties testifying except by the federal panel. The panel is present for obtaining an understanding of the many problems involved. While the hearing is in session, no one will be recognized to speak other than the parties who wish to testify or present statements and members of the panel. Each witness will have the choice of either presenting without any oral testimony a written statement or presenting a

written statement for incorporation to the recording and in addition presenting an oral statement or 3) presenting an oral statement. It is wished that the presentations be kept to 10 minutes. All parties will be limited to a maximum of 15 minutes. There is a list of the parties interested in participating, showing the order in which they will appear.

At 21:30 of the recording a list of names that plan on presenting are announced. These names include: Governor Keith H. Miller, Deputy Commissioner Dale Wallington, Department of Natural Resources State of Alaska, Deputy Commissioner Ben Hilliker, Department of Fish and Game State of Alaska, James Anderich, Chief Branch of Environmental Health Department of Health and Welfare State of Alaska, Commissioner Harold D. Strandberg, Department of Public Works, H.D. Skoogul, Deputy Commissioner Department of Highways State of Alaska. R.G. Delaney, Chairman of TAPS, Dr. Edgar Wayburn, Vice President of the Sierra Club, Harry Porter, Acting Mayor of Fairbanks Alaska, Al Swalling, Chairman North Commission of the State of Alaska, Phil Douglas, Executive Secretary Sports Fishing Institute, David M. Hickock, Federal Field Committee for development Planning in Alaska, Professor Charles Conningsburg, Alaska Methodist University Anchorage Alaska, Sharon M. Sissna Anchorage Alaska, Eban Hopson, executive director of Artic Slope Native Association, Daniel L. Osburn, Alaska Alpine Club. If there are any parties who have not registered and wish to be heard they should register with Mrs. Hendricks at the table in the foyer. He says an additional list of parties desiring to be heard will be posted in the foyer in the afternoon. After the formal hearing the record will be held open for 15 days or until September 15th, 1969. Written statements will be received for inclusion with the record of the proceeding. Any statements should be filed with Mr. Patrick Ryan, the regional coordinator for all interior agencies at his office which is 632 6th Avenue Room 410 Anchorage, Alaska. Copies of the record of the hearing including all written statements will be available for public inspection at the BLM offices at Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Washington DC. Copies of the transcript which will include everything that is spoken but not the written statements can be made by making arrangements with the reporter. He says they would like to have the hearing as formal as possible and he asks that there be no display of any emotion either by applause or otherwise during presentation of testimony.

The first witness is presented at 27:25. Keith H. Miller, the Governor of the state of Alaska. Secretary Train says that the panel is glad that the governor is here today to lead off. He says he is extremely grateful for the department of the interior for the scheduling of the pipeline hearings. He is also grateful the meetings are in Fairbanks, a central location. The meetings are part of a new way the Department of Interior is approaching state issues. He believes the Department of the Interior should be commended. He hopes the new federal concern for the state will continue to the future. The decade has been one of frustrated progress and natural disasters. Many of the efforts to develop a thriving economy were not decided by the massive Good Friday earthquake of 1964. The process and steps to make developments in Alaska is discussed. He claims that the flood of Fairbanks in 1967 was one of the most disastrous floods of all time. The awesome challenges have been met and the roots in Alaska have grown even deeper. He says he wants to show that the state of Alaska has been working on developing it resources and protect the fragile environment of the country. He would like to set out basic principles which orient the approach of his administration to develop the natural resources of Alaska. First the basic responsibility belongs to the state itself. Any state has the jurisdiction over its environment

because the authors of the constitution believe the state is in best position. It should be a truism that each state has the right to control the use of its natural resources. This has not always been the case in the history of Alaska. The territory of Alaska did not always have control over its natural resources and this is one of the major reasons for the seeking of statehood. Second, the transportation of natural resources to market is a matter of concern for state and federal governments. There are aspects that are most appropriately dealt with at the national level. There are other aspects that are a state concern. There should be a close coordination between federal and state governments especially when the transportation route is within the state. Third, the criterion of natural resource development in Alaska is maximum use consistent with the public interest. This is the language of our Alaska constitution. Conservation of natural resources in Alaska is a subject of daily concern for Alaskans. Alaskans also have a special interest in the conservation of the environment because it is our environment. Governor Miller says these principles should assist in the development of the pipeline in Alaska. The first major oil field was discovered in 1957. The present annual production of oil runs approximately 160 million dollars from the Kenai Peninsula and the Cook Inlet Fields. The oil industry has already invested over 1.25 billion dollars in Alaska. These big investments can continue. Although costs are high for development in Alaska, production is also high. Some 50 million dollars has been invested in one of the largest urea plants in the world for the production of fertilizer. Another 57 million dollars is invested into a gas liquefaction plant which will ship liquefied petroleum gas to Japan for use by the city of Tokyo. It seems that more petrochemical plants will be used in Alaska. New industries mean more jobs and a better way of life for all Alaskans. One concern is a possible delay in the development of the pipeline because of protracted negotiations between the parties involved. Alaska is concerned for a delay because it means a delay in the benefits for Alaskans. He believes the basic objection is environmental conservation. Alaska agrees there must be conservation safeguards before a grant of permit for pipeline development. He would like to emphasize that the state has present conservation responsibilities over the pipeline corridor and that the state has a special interest in the corridor. He suggests that it is in the best interest in the state and federal governments that the state has control over the transportation corridor. He believes it makes more sense to have a single government has control over the efforts. Stipulations include proposed environmental standards for the Livengood to Yukon River road contract executed between TAPS and the state of Alaska. He says the discussions should be accelerated for environmental standards included in a pipeline construction permit so the governments are in accord with the standards. He says he has appointed a task force to work on the project for the next several weeks. He hopes the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee will approve shortly after Congress reconvenes in September. He says he has brought with him his cabinet and other key state officials. They are all dedicated public servants. Today each of them is going to explain that there is the potential in Alaska to control a project of this magnitude. Alaska has never been afraid of challenges and Alaskans won't back away from this one. Governor Miller submits his statement which is designated exhibit 1. Secretary Train responds by saying the panel welcomes a group put together by Governor Miller to work on the stipulations of the pipeline. He says the standards the state has developed are good.

The next witness is Deputy Commissioner Dale Wallington, Department of Natural Resources State of Alaska at 42:45 of the recording. He says his testimony will show that the Department of Natural Resources has the experience to supervise in cooperation with other agencies, the use of Alaska's water

and land resources. Article A of Section I of the Alaska State Constitution states that it is a policy of the state to encourage the settlement of the lands and to develop its resources and use them to the maximum in favor of public interest. Section III Article A of the state that fish, wildlife, and waters are reserved for the people in common use. The statutes define water as all water of the state occurring in their natural state except mineral and medicinal waters. The government owns those waters. Chapter 60 from 1966 is described and is delegated as the "Alaska Water Use Act." Emphasis is being given to appropriate statutes because a substantial number of proposed pipeline and road stipulations are concerned with water use. The proposed stipulations also contain a number of items relating to the management of land resources. The responsibility of state lands has been assigned to the division of lands. The Department of Land's responsibilities are discussed. The BLM and the adopted exploration control guidelines are discussed. The department of natural resources through the division of lands drafted a meaningful practical and enforceable set of regulations to assure maximum reasonable protection to all resources. The details of these regulations are explored. Deputy Commissioner Wallington says that the commissioner has held informal meetings over the past 9 months with interested groups. The final proposals will be adopted after formal hearings next month. The regulations seem mutually agreeable and satisfactory to all parties. Lease and granted land stipulations are discussed. Agreements with the Department of Fish and Game are also discussed. The Administrator Procedure Act is discussed. The Land Classification Regulation is discussed. The classification of the waterfall area of the Susitna Flats is discussed. The Healgrass area in the Eisenbach Region is discussed. The Parks and Recreation Department is discussed. The Parks and Recreation Department has an agreement with the University of Alaska for a recreation study of the Keystone Canyon Area. The responsibility of the Parks and Recreation Department is discussed. He says there are too many instances of man's carelessness in the environment especially with fire. The Division of Oil and Gas and Soil Conservation experiments on the North Slope are discussed. The testimony discussed substantiated Governor Miller's statement. It indicates the experience and desire of state personnel to manage the state of Alaska. The statement and attachments are designated as exhibit number 2.

The next witness is Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Fish and Game in the state of Alaska, Ben Hilliker at 55:21. The Department of Fish and Game in Alaska is composed of 28 fish biologists, 45 game biologists, 63 commercial fishery biologists, 3 engineers, and two habitat development biologists. The staff has the responsibility of managing fish and game resources for the state of Alaska. The Fish and Game Department has existed for 10 years. The department was formed in 1949 and functioned as a territorial department of fisheries until 1959. The challenges the Department of Fish and Game faced are discussed. Since 1867 when Alaska was purchased from Alaska, the territories primary economic interest revolved around salmon fishing and gold mining. The presumably inexhaustible salmon resource peaks in 1936 when 8.5 million cases of salmon were packed around Alaska. The history of the salmon resources is discussed. He says any resource is exhaustible. The optimum level for the salmon resources lies between 8.5 million in 1936 and the 1.9 cases of 1959. The Department of Fish and Game is in the process of determining the optimal level for Alaska fishing. Research indicates that through manmade structures and work in the streams, salmon production may be greatly increased. Except for the year 1967, since 1959 there has been a rising trend in the salmon production techniques in Alaska. He says there are continual efforts for total rehabilitation of the salmon resources. The Department of

Fish and Game is facing a challenge similar to the one presented in 1959, not one dedicated to rehabbing salmon resources but instead there is an effort to decrease the impact of industrial development on existing fishery resources. The proposed TAPS crosses 152 streams and 23 major rivers between Prudhoe and Valdez. The current knowledge is now comprehensive enough to provide appropriate fishing measures. Data is being collected north of Livengood for comprehensive fishing protection in that region. Logging operations are experiencing a similar problem in southeastern Alaska. Joint services between Department of Fish and Game and United States Forest Services are discussed. The programs of protecting fishing resources in logging areas has been protected. The pipeline will represent a major landscape feature of the country side which it crosses. The history of land development in other states has been a sorry one. In Alaska there is the compulsion and opportunity to avoid the dilemma. Cooperation between Department of Fish and Game and other groups are existent. The Department of Health and Welfare and the Department of Highways are discussed. The Department of Fish and Game is not overwhelmed by the responsibility presented as a result of the oil and TAPS. Commissioner Hilliker's written statement and agreement are marked as exhibit number 3.

The next witness is James Andurig, Chief Branch of Environment Health, Department of Health and Welfare, state of Alaska. The recording ends.