To some this would make a great postcard. To us it makes a great home.

We're the Inupiat Eskimos of Alaska's North Slope and our people have lived here in the Arctic for thousands of years. We should not be penalized just because some Americans think the Arctic Coastal Plain is an untouched wilderness. It is not. It is our home.

Today, Congress is debating whether to open the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge for oil and gas development. We believe they should.

We know that the Arctic can provide America the energy it needs and continue to provide a home for the Inupiat people and the wildlife we depend on. So we'll make sure it's developed safely. After all, we want to keep our home picture perfect too.

Open the ANWR Coastal Plain for Development
North Slope Borough, P.O. Box 69, Barrow, Alaska 99723

Unfunded environmental mandates

U.S. mayors want Congress to stop passing the buck

Over 100 U.S. mayors have launched a campaign to inform Congress of an impending fiscal crisis at the local level in paying for the increasing costs of environmental mandates.

At the center of the mayors’ legislative effort is a 50-page report on unfunded environmental mandates produced by RDC board member Paula Easley, Government Relations Director for the Municipality of Anchorage.

The report, “Paying for Federal Environmental Mandates: A Looming Crisis for Cities and Counties,” warns that local government cannot afford to implement the myriad of federal mandates without cutting back on other crucial services or raising taxes on residents. It was released at a January 18 press conference during the winter meeting of the U.S. Conference of Mayors in Washington, D.C.

The bipartisan group of 114 mayors from 49 states sent letters and the report to President Clinton and Congress urging that local governments be given flexibility to set priorities among competing concerns.

Easley noted that the federal rules are frequently too inflexible to take into account local variations in environmental quality and do not allow local governments to focus on the greatest risks first. The mayors argue that cities are commonly required to spend millions of dollars to control negligible risks.

“This must be done to assure that environmental protection investments are made where they accomplish the greatest good,” said Easley, the report’s author. “Although many members of Congress are aware of our concerns, the prevailing view still seems to be that ‘we just can’t spend too much on the environment.’”

Easley said there is urgent need for intelligent discourse about what will work and what won’t. “Not only do we sometimes pay too much to solve environmental problems, we’ve been known to confront the wrong problems for the wrong reasons with the wrong technology.”

Easley’s analysis highlighted concerns regarding the costs of complying with a full range of mandates, including those dealing with clean air and water, hazardous waste handling and wetlands. Her report struck a nerve with many mayors.

It’s time that the governments above us stop writing checks out of our checkbook,” said Mayor Mara Giulianti of Hollywood, California.

Mayor Edward Rendell of Philadelphia noted “It is becoming increasingly difficult for local jurisdictions to comply..."
**Alaska's royal family invited to President's first meal**

Members of Alaska’s royal family were invited to share a table with Bill Clinton at his first meal as President of the United States. But, in the “sea or eaten” environment of the nation’s capital, Alaska king salmon were on the menu and not on the guest list.

When noted Chef Juan Sanchez needed salmon fit for a President, he looked for a king. In order to get just the right fish for the occasion, Sanchez asked the Alaska Seafood Marketing Institute for help.

ASMI, working in conjunction with the Alaska Trollers’ Association, contacted several Sitka processors, where a winter king salmon opening was underway, and placed a special order for 17 Alaska king salmon to be served at President Clinton’s official inaugural luncheon.

“ critiques of the timber industry believe logging is occurring at an excessive pace in the Tongass, threatening the fishing and tourism industries and the forest’s wildlife. Consider these facts: Two-thirds of the commercial old-growth forest in the Tongass is closed to logging. Harvesting takes place on one-third of the commercial forest land over a year-long rotating cycle. In the one-third of the forest open to logging, thousands of acres bordering salmon streams, beaches, scenic passages, critical wildlife habitat areas and muskegs have been put into buffer strips which ban logging. There are no endangered or threatened species in the Tongass. Logging didn’t begin yesterday in the Tongass. Since 1950, 376,000 acres or 2.2% of the Tongass has been logged. The fishing and tourism industries are doing just fine. Fishermen have enjoyed record harvests and populations are strong. Under the current management plan, logging will have affected only 9% of the Tongass or 38% of its old growth after 100 years. Since trees are a renewable resource, loggers will go back in 100 years and harvest the second growth timber, meaning that 91% of the Tongass or 62% of the old growth will never see a tree cut.'
It's a question of self-determination for the Inuit people.

ANWR: