



STATE OF ALASKA  
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR  
JUNEAU

January 18, 1994

*The Vice President  
The White House  
Washington, DC 20510*

*Dear Mr. Vice President:*

*As you may know, Alaskans are now actively helping Russia to build democratic institutions and a market economy, to establish transportation, communications, and trade, and to protect our common environment, especially in the arctic and the rich seas between us.*

*In light of your recent trip and your ongoing discussions with Russian leaders, I believe there are some things you can do for our common environment.*

*Arctic residents face risks to their health and well-being from nuclear waste, nuclear power, and other forms of pollution that are brought in from points south. From our participation in The Northern Forum--an association of 21 northern state and regional governors that I chair--and in the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy--we see several opportunities ripe for action by you and your counterpart leaders:*

- 1. You may decide that the current U.S.-Russia environmental agreement, signed in 1972, should be revised to reflect current concerns. If you establish a working group to attend to this idea, Alaska will support the effort.*
- 2. The United States should assist Russia to identify requirements for a nuclear waste site that would obviate Russia's need to dump radioactive waste in the oceans.*
- 3. We ask that the United States and Russia agree to provide safety and communications equipment to the Bilibino nuclear power plant, close to Alaska on the Chukotka Peninsula, including monitoring, and allow for direct notification to the State of Alaska in the case of an accident.*
- 4. We believe the United States, Russia, and other arctic nations should enlist regional governments in the arctic, through The Northern Forum, to establish a long-term monitoring program for radionuclides and arctic*

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*contaminants, with long-term funding commitments, to support needs of protecting our people, and to help meet the goals of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy.*

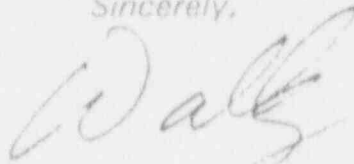
- 5. As you have made the connection between trade and environmental protection in the North American Free Trade Agreement debate, we believe it is important to make that connection with Russia as well. Many Alaskan industries face a competitive disadvantage from Russian counterparts that do not practice strong environmental protection. U.S. trade and aid programs can target ways to help level the playing field.*

*This is a lengthy list of issues, but the opportunity to set the stage at the beginning of your Administration is too important to pass up. We will work with specific agencies of the federal government to see these ideas through to fruition, if you give the word that you are interested.*

*Thank you for considering these issues of interest to all residents of the arctic.*

*With best regards,*

*Sincerely,*



*Walter J. Hickel  
Governor*

*cc: The Honorable Les Aspin  
The Honorable Bruce Babbitt  
The Honorable Warren Christopher  
The Honorable Hazel O'Leary  
Ambassador Strobe Talbott  
The Honorable Carol Browner  
Mr. James Baker  
Commissioner Iva: Selin*