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News Release

For Immediate Release

Friday, Feb. 4, 2005

UA President, Regent Chairman Praise Murkowski Land Grant Bill

UA President Mark Hamilton on Friday encouraged state lawmakers to pass Gov. Frank Murkowski's proposed university land grant bill, which would transfer 260,000 acres of state land to the university. Murkowski announced his bill today during a press conference held at the Fairbanks campus.

Hamilton said the governor's bill and a companion piece of federal legislation announced today by U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, would make good on promises made long ago.

"Only two states in the union have university land grants smaller than the University of Alaska--Hawaii and Delaware," Hamilton said. "Those statistics are almost unconscionable for a state as vast as ours."

Hamilton went on, "While a land grant wouldn't replace the responsibility of an annual financial commitment from the state, it would go a long way toward securing a stable future for the university system."

Brian Rogers, chairman of the Board of Regents, also applauded the proposals. "A land grant to a university is a commitment to its long-term fiscal stability. The original UA land grants are now funding most of the Alaska Scholars program, and I'm hopeful that this grant can make as big an impact in the decades ahead."

Sen. Murkowski's legislation would convey up to 500,000 additional acres of federal land to the university.

The university currently owns and manages approximately 182,000 acres across the state. By comparison, Oklahoma and New Mexico each have over 1 million acres. New York State's university land grant is nearly 1 million acres.

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For more information Friday, contact Joe Beedle, VP Finance, at 907/450-8022

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