

# ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

## MONTHLY PRESIDENT'S REPORT



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## DEAR AFN CO-CHAIRS, BOARD MEMBERS & MEMBERSHIP,

2014 will be a critical year on many fronts for our people. We have the opportunity to help shape our future with the choices we make and the actions we take.

In February, we convened an important gathering of Native leaders to focus on the recent action by Governor Sean Parnell and his administration to appeal the State of Alaska v Sally Jewell, Secretary of the United States Department of Interior (Katie John case) to the US Supreme Court -- a Leadership Retreat on Subsistence. The Governor and his legal team are trying to overturn Native victories at the lower courts, and shift the balance between the federal and state government over management of subsistence on federal public lands and waters. This is not in the Native peoples best interest and will hurt us gravely.

We have responded vigorously, engaging top lawyers and partnering closely with the Native American Rights Fund (NARF). We gathered our lawyers to review our options and carefully develop the pros and cons of each. We also paid attention to political dynamics in the state and on the national level. We noted that 2014 is an election year and many actions are viewed through what helps or hurts various candidates in their elections.

At the Leadership Retreat, we briefed those gathered on the substance of the court case, why the state appealed it, and what the consequences could be if the US Supreme Court took the case. We outlined the following schedule: AFN's meetings with the US Department of Justice to coordinate legal arguments (early February); Deadline for AFN's response to the US Supreme Court (Feb 20th); Deadline for the US Government's response to the US Supreme Court (Feb 20th); US Supreme Court's internal conference to decided whether to review the case or let it stand (March 28th); Expected US Supreme Court decision on whether to take the case or not (March 31st).

If the US Supreme Court takes the case for review, we can expect briefings and oral arguments over the later summer months and early fall. A final decision from the US Supreme Court would be expected in January 2015. This timeline is very important. It will guide us in our work and shape much of the political environment as both the federal and state governments prepare to implement the decision. In many ways, Native people are caught in the middle. We have to defend the court case because it is in our best interest. But sadly, even if we win in the US Supreme Court, the subsistence management system will still be broken and ineffective.

AFN legal counsel has identified four potential, high-priority legal and political options to achieve real reform:

- 1. Federal administrative action.** Pursuing an Executive Order and actions from the White House mandating federal and tribal co-management of fish & wildlife on federal public lands. (Over 60% of Alaska is federal public lands.)

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**2. State legislative action.** Trying to engage the Alaska State Legislature in getting involved again, and to consider ending dual management by amending the state constitution and giving the State of Alaska the legal option to have a state statute which would provide a subsistence priority and reinstitute a unified management system on all lands in Alaska.

**3. Congressional action.** Further educating the relevant Committees in the US Congress who have jurisdiction over Alaska Natives and subsistence hunting and fishing rights; seeking further Congressional hearings and field visits to educate new Members; and seeking introduction of new legislation to fix the broken system. In this area, it is our hope that the end result would be greater protections in federal law, and greater opportunities for Alaska Natives to be involved in management of the resources we depend upon.

**4. Capacity Building.** Focusing on what we can do for ourselves without regard to federal or state action.

As you know, Native leaders at the Retreat greatly favored the capacity building option, followed by the federal administrative action option, state legislative action option, and finally the Congressional action option.

A draft white paper summarizing the AFN retreat is attached. Please take the time to read and study the issues. We need all Alaska Native people to understand what is at risk and get involved. We need everyone's help. This is a critical time and if we do nothing we will lose our legal protections for subsistence.

Thank you to all the Native leaders who contributed their time and best thinking to make the Leadership Retreat a valuable first step.

We will provide further updates on what is happening and where you can help in future AFN President's Reports.

Sincerely,

Julie Kitka, President  
Alaska Federation of Natives

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## UPCOMING

### HEARING: AHTNA LAND CO-MANAGEMENT

MARCH 14 | TIME TBD  
HOUSE SUBCOMMITTEE ON INDIAN AND ALASKA NATIVE AFFAIRS, WASHINGTON, DC

### ILOC HEARING

MARCH 11 | 8AM  
COMMUNITY & REGIONAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE, JUNEAU

### HONORING OUR CHILDREN DAY

APRIL 26, 2014 | ALL DAY  
ALL ALASKA (SEE PAGE 5)

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## SUBSISTENCE RETREAT

Nothing is more important to Alaska Native peoples than protecting our subsistence way of life. Indeed, subsistence is at the core of our culture and identity. Threats to subsistence are threats to our cultural survival. As such, our subsistence fishing, hunting, and gathering must continue to receive legal protection. The State of Alaska is currently threatening this protection.

On February 3rd, AFN convened an intensive gathering of nearly 200 Native leaders to consider all legal, political, and grassroots options for defending our subsistence rights in 2014 (and beyond).

AFN assembled panels of legal and policy experts to present us with their best thinking on the pros and cons of our options moving forward. We then heard from our congressional delegation (their comments are summarized in the pages following) and dedicated the afternoon to intensive decision-making group sessions, the draft results of which accompany this report.



## ACTION TIMELINE

### Early February

DOJ meetings to coordinate legal arguments (see pg. 15)

### February 20

Deadline for AFN's response to the US Supreme Court & for US Government's response to US Supreme Court

### March 28

US Supreme Court's internal conference to decide whether to review the case

### March 31

Expected US Supreme Court decision on whether to take the case or not

### Late Summer/Fall

Briefings & oral arguments (if US Supreme Court takes the case)

### January 2015

Final decision from the US Supreme Court

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## SUBSISTENCE RETREAT

### Delegation Statements: Senator Begich

U.S. Senator Mark Begich next addressed Alaska Native leaders in person, giving a brief account of his involvement in subsistence reform, noting the importance of voting, and providing updates on several pieces of federal legislation.

- Anchorage Assembly Passed Advisory Vote by 70%. In the 1990s, Senator Begich worked with the Anchorage Assembly to pass an advisory vote to put subsistence reform on the state ballot. The vote passed by a 70% margin. However, the state legislature ignored the vote.
- Farm Bill Provides for Subsistence Food Service. The Farm Bill includes a provision that allows subsistence food to be served in federal facilities.
- Appropriations Bill Provides Chinook Industry Relief. Senator Begich, together with Senator Murkowski, worked hard to ensure that last omnibus appropriations bill included \$75 million dollars for fishery disasters, including Alaska's Chinook industry.
- Magnuson-Stevens Act Up for Reauthorization. Senator Begich is working hard to recognize subsistence fishers in the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Even sports fishers are commenting that subsistence uses are not adequately provided for. Senator Begich is also working hard to ensure Alaska salmon cannot be genetically engineered. He is also working on labeling guidelines, so consumers know where their seafood is coming from.
- Pebble Mine. Several subsistence users told Senator Begich that if the Pebble Mine was approved it would destroy their way of life. For this reason, and others, he publically opposed the mine. However, he does not oppose all mining, and was just up at Red Dog Mine.
- Vote Out Politicians Who Do Not Support Alaska Native Issues. As a final point, Senator Begich noted that another option for Alaska Native leaders to consider in the subsistence reform is electing politicians who support Alaska Native issues, and to increase the Native vote. By example, 10,000 Natives people are living in the Mat-Su borough, however, less than 20% vote, because they are still registered in their home villages. This has to change.



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## SUBSISTENCE RETREAT

### Delegation Statements: Senator Murkowski

Senator Lisa Murkowski next addressed Alaska Native leaders via satellite feed, stating she generally supports subsistence reform. She also provided several other remarks.

- Obama Administration is Directive, Not Collaborative. Senator Murkowski said that she is observing Washington, D.C. is telling Alaska what it can and cannot do with increased frequency.
- Subsistence Dialog February 20th in Anchorage. On February 20, 2014, Senator Murkowski held a subsistence dialog at the University of Alaska Anchorage, starting at 1:00 p.m. to discuss co-management. Senator Murkowski conceded that federal and state co-management is not working, but said she disfavors federal legislation as her preferred alternative to correct this problem in the current political climate.
- Chinook Disaster Funds. As noted above, Senators Murkowski and Begich successfully secured \$75 million for fisheries disasters, including Alaska's Chinook fishing industry. However, the funds fall short of the need; thus, Alaska Native leaders must be creative in how the funds are spent. The Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative has a good approach.
- Opportunities to Raise the Subsistence Issue in Washington, D.C. President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife, Rhea Suh, will soon appear before Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Senator Murkowski intends to pepper her with questions about her view on subsistence. Senator Murkowski also made sure that the White House Congressional Liaison, Katherine Fallon, understands that subsistence reform is a priority for Alaska Native people.
- Disappointed Secretary Jewell Did Not Participate. Finally, Senator Murkowski remarked that she was disappointed Interior Secretary Sally Jewell did not participate in the retreat, and said she informed Ms. Fallon it would have been particularly helpful for Secretary Jewell to weigh in, and assure Alaska's Native people that the Obama administration is aware of the issue.



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## SUBSISTENCE RETREAT

### Delegation Statements: Congressman Young

Congressman Don Young next addressed retreat participants via satellite feed, noting he too generally supports subsistence reform. He also provided updates on several pieces of federal legislation.

- Farm Bill to Permit Service of Subsistence Foods. Congressman Young reported that he was able to amend the Farm Bill to allow for the service of subsistence foods in federal facilities. He also said the House rejected the Senate's \$40 billion cut to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which directly benefits 95,000 Alaskans.
- Bird Feather Bill to Prohibit Prosecution of Artists. Congressman Young is working to add a provision to the Bird Feather Bill that precludes the prosecution of artists who use "road kill" birds for art.
- Hearing Scheduled for Ahtna Co-Management Proposal. Congressman Young said he is looking forward to a "very interesting" hearing on Ahnta's co-management proposal. However, he estimates it may be hard for his colleagues to support. Therefore, Congressman Young suggests that Ahtna initiate a state campaign on the issue. He also said that he wants "good testimony" when the proposal comes before the House Natural Resources Committee, with solid solutions.



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## SUBSISTENCE RETREAT

### Statement from the Secretary of Interior



Hi Everyone I'm Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Department of Interior. I'm sorry I'm not able to be with you in person for the AFN board retreat on subsistence. I hope that my colleagues Pat Pourchot from the Office of the Secretary and Bruce Loudermilk from the BLA Regional office are able to be with you today, but I know they represent me in conveying to you our interest in working closely with you on subsistence rights for Alaska Natives. There are many challenges that we have to deal with in the state of Alaska. Alaska is unique, you've got state management of fish and wild life and we have federal management of fish and wild life on Federal Lands. And while none of us may have chosen to write title 8 of ANILCA the way it's written, that is in fact the law so we want to work with you to figure out how we can address the federal side of subsistence program to support the interests and the needs of Alaska Natives. I know you've got suggestions and you've got concerns. I want to encourage you to work alongside each other to sort of come together on what's most important to you, but I also encourage you to work with the Alaska Congressional Delegation, your Senators and Representatives, so that they can help represent statutory changes to the US Congress so that those changes can reflect your interests and needs. I want to build on the work of my predecessor Ken Salazar. I know he added two members to the FSB from the Alaska Native subsistence community to make sure the voices were at the table as needed. I want to build on his good work and build on work of my colleagues up there in their work with you to make sure that we are fulfilling the interest that you have and the rights that you have regarding subsistence. I invite you to come and visit me in Washington DC and I would love to come and visit you again in Alaska and I look forward to that meeting. Have a great retreat I hope it's very productive, enjoy the rest of winter and break up and I hope that your subsistence harvest in the coming year is a fruitful one for everyone. Thank you so much.

## CALL-TO-ACTION

It has become clear that AFN and the Native leadership needs to follow-up with the Secretaries of both Interior & Agriculture.

Both federal agencies have responsibilities to protect subsistence. AFN's top priority is to clarify the federal trust responsibility and encourage stronger and smarter engagement. We need the Secretaries of Interior & Agriculture totally briefed on what is happening and prepared to take effective steps in a timely manner. This observation became crystal clear at the Leadership Retreat, most strikingly in Secretary Jewell's video statement (transcribed at left).

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## SUBSISTENCE RESOLUTIONS UPDATE

Resolutions 13-3, 13-4, 13-5, 13-7, 13-6, 13-39

This month the AFN subsistence committee approved a draft strategic plan, incorporating input from AFN's February 3rd Subsistence Retreat. The plan delineates major actions to be taken in Q1 and Q2 of this year, as well as projections as to AFN's action plans following the Supreme Court's ruling on Katie John in April. The draft plan is included with this report as a PDF.

Last week, Tim Andrew of AVCP testified at a Magnuson-Stevens Act reauthorization hearing in Washington DC. Jerry Isaac, Natasha Singh and Sky Starkey made the rounds on the Hill about the draft reauthorization.

Senator Lisa Murkowski hosted a subsistence round table in Anchorage on February 20th between the state and Native leaders. Myron Naneng and Michelle Anderson presented about the demonstration projects they've been promoting.

Also on February 20th, AFN submitted official comments related to the US Fish and Wildlife Service's late 2013 guidance on the definition of "Significantly Altered" as it pertains to items made from sea otter. The full text of the letter is included here as a PDF.



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## FEBRUARY BOARD MEETING

### Shared Priorities

The full AFN board met on February 12th in Juneau to review progress and set priorities.

In addition, the AFN Board met with Governor Sean Parnell at the Governor's Mansion. AFN Board members listened to the Governor describe his priorities for the legislative session, and shared their concerns. Of particular emphasis, there was a respectful, but heated discussion about the Governor's decision to appeal the State of Alaska v Jewell (Katie John case) to the US Supreme Court. AFN Board members urged the Governor to withdraw his appeal and look for a solution at the state level.

Following the board meeting, AFN honored longtime educators Gordon L. Pullar and Miranda Wright during a recent community reception hosted by the Sealaska Corporation in Juneau. Pullar, Kodiak Island Sugpiaq, is a UAF Associate Professor who was instrumental in the design and implementation of UAF's Rural Development MA program, teaching classes on indigenous issues such as identity land claims, leadership and organization management. Wright, Koyukon Athabascan, is an Associate Professor and Director of the Department of Alaska Native Studies and Rural Development (DANSRD) at UAF. Both are soon to retire from teaching.

The Juneau dance group Yees Ku Oo performed several wonderful songs. The community reception was deliciously catered by the Alaska Native Sisterhood Glacier Valley Camp 70.

A PDF of the reception program is included with this report.

## UPCOMING CONT.

### NEXT FULL BOARD MEETING

MAY 7, 2014  
KODIAK, ALASKA



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## AFN BOARD PRE-MEETING IN JUNEAU

### Resolutions 13-11, 13-16, 13-18, 13-26, 13-40, 13-8 through 13-24

The AFN board and staff members met with several legislators in Juneau on February 11th to discuss the following topics:

- Present CAAN State Priorities
- Seek support for Honoring Our Children Day
- Opposition to SJR 9
- Homework club or tutoring sessions
- Hearing for Indian Law & Order Commission (ILOC) Report
- More Drug Treatment Centers
- Medicaid Expansion
- Support VPSO firearm bill



AFN staff and CAAN representatives received unanimous support from legislators for the idea of an “Honoring our Children” day (set for April 26th - see page 18 for further details). Commissioner Mike Hanley agreed to have the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development involved. Many legislators indicated interest in sponsoring a bill that would recognize this day if it isn’t recognized by the Governor as a proclamation.

A few judiciary committee members had not heard of the ILOC report and were cautious about agreeing to put together a hearing. Rep. Bryce Edgmon, chairman of the Bush Caucus, was supportive of an ILOC report hearing. Rep. Gabrielle LeDoux, co-chair of the committee of Community and Regional Affairs, was open to the idea of conducting a hearing. **The Community & Regional Affairs Committee agreed at AFN's request to hold a hearing on the report. The hearing has been scheduled for March 11th at 8am. Please consider calling in to listen (contact your local leg. affairs office to ask to be included) and sending a letter of support. A sample letter is attached.**

Many legislators asked about AFN’s position on SB98, a legislative proposal creating a path for qualified VPSOs to carry firearms. AFN is supportive of the bill, under the condition that VPSOs are properly qualified and trained. The bill recently passed the Senate on February 13th, with serious concerns raised.

As a supplementary report, some legislators (Rep. Gattis and Sen. Dyson) described research in support of vocational opportunities in secondary schools. They indicated that vocational programs have lowered the dropout rate in schools where programs are available. Sen. Dyson inquired as to AFN’s position on SB56, which would make the possession of a small amount of certain drugs a misdemeanor instead of a felony. AFN had no comment on this, but followed up with discussion regarding the need for more drug treatment facilities.

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## SAMPLE LETTER

March 6, 2014

The Honorable Gabrielle LeDoux  
Co-Chair, Community & Regional Affairs  
416 State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801

The Honorable Ben Nageak  
Co-Chair, Community & Regional Affairs  
428 State Capitol, Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Committee presentation on the Indian Law & Order Commission's "Roadmap for Making Native America Safer"

Dear Representative LeDoux and Representative Nageak:

My name is (*your first and last name*) and I am from (*your home community*). I understand the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee will hear the first of two presentations on the Indian Law & Order Commission's report, "A Roadmap for Making Native America Safer" on March 11, 2014, followed by a second presentation to explore recommendations to improve public safety in rural areas of Alaska in early April. I appreciate your leadership in recognizing the need to educate and collaborate with your colleagues, and the public, to improve access to justice, availability of law enforcement, and public safety resources in rural Alaska.

*(Include a personal story. Tell your representative why the issue is important to you and how it affects you, your family and your community. Examples: no VPSO in your community, experience waiting for a trooper/VPSO to arrive after an incident, having to travel for court or incarceration, fear that you/your relatives would have nowhere to go if in a domestic violence situation, difficulty navigating the justice system remotely.)*

I look forward to learning about the experiences of others from across the state during these presentations and the affirmative steps being taken to improve public safety in (*your home community*) and throughout Alaska.

Sincerely,

SIGN YOUR NAME  
Print your name  
Street address  
City, State, Zip

Cc: Members of Community & Regional Affairs Committee:  
Representative Foster  
Representative Herron  
Representative Olson  
Representative Reinbold  
Representative Kito III

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## AFN COUNCIL ON THE ADVANCEMENT OF ALASKA NATIVES PRIORITIES

Resolutions 13-11, 13-16, 13-18, 13-26, 13-40, 13-8  
through 13-24

### ACCESS TO RESOURCES

AFN urges the State to make investments in programs that support tribal self-determination and promote economic development in rural Alaska. Effective economic stimulus programs must be tailored to the unique circumstances in rural Alaska. Fulfillment of basic needs like adequate housing, access to nutritious meals, sewage systems, and clean water are often taken for granted in the Lower 48; that is simply not the case in many rural Alaskan villages. Read the full text of related priorities and recommendations in the PDF appended to this report.

### EDUCATING ALASKA NATIVES

These statistics compel us to seek a new approach to education for Alaska Natives. Part of the reason for poor academic achievement among Native students is the lack of culture-based programs. State law must give us the flexibility to integrate Native culture into the curriculum in our schools. Read the full text of related priorities and recommendations in the PDF appended to this report.

### PUBLIC SAFETY: WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND VULNERABLE CITIZENS

Protecting women, children, and vulnerable citizens from violence and abuse is one part of ensuring rural Alaskans are safe in their home communities. Following the release of the Indian Law & Order Commission's "Roadmap for Making Native America Safer" in 2013, new opportunities are available for community members, leaders, and lawmakers to work together to increase public safety in Alaska. Senator Begich called the findings of the report on safety in rural Alaska "horrific" and says he "refuse[s] to let the report recommendations get filed away and forgotten." Read the full text of related priorities and recommendations in the PDF appended to this report.

The US Senate Indian Affairs Committee held its first hearing on the report. AFN will be meeting with our Congressional delegation to follow-up on needed actions and suggest innovative new ideas. AFN looks forward to working with both Senators Begich & Murkowski and their Colleagues on timely responses. On the House side, AFN will continue to urge the US House Resources Committee to hold a hearing soon. Further, AFN will ask for field hearing in Alaska this summer. A good time for these field hearings would be when NCAI travels to Alaska for their mid-year session.

### Big Brothers Big Sisters Alaska Native Mentoring

This month, AFN will formalize an MOU with BBBS to provide academic and social-emotional support to Alaska Native students. BBBS' letter to AFN accompanies this report, the MOU will be shared when approved by the board.

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AFN staff traveled to DC in early February to meet with Senior officials at the US Department of Justice (DOJ). Key DOJ attorneys we met with include:

**Tony West**, Assistant Attorney General

**Sam Hirsch**, Deputy Associate Attorney General in the Office of the Associate Attorney General

**Brian Martinez**, Chief of Staff

**Cindy Chang**, Special Assistant and Attorney Advisor

**Anna Martinez**, Counsel to the Associate Attorney General

**Ethan Shenkman**, Deputy Assistant Attorney General

**Tracy Toulou**, Director of the Office of Tribal Justice (OTJ)

The key areas of discussion included pending federal voting rights legislation and the need for a Native amendment; subsistence, both the state's appeal of the Katie John decision to the US Supreme Court and requested their help in drafting a proposed Presidential Executive Order on co-management; and lastly we discussed the Federal Law and Order Commission report and justice issues in Alaska. Associate Attorney General Tony West agreed to follow-up meetings with AFN to work towards concrete solutions and to travel to Alaska to participate in AFN meetings on justice. He will be in Alaska during the NCAI mid-year session (June 2014). AFN will plan a specific session on the needs of our communities.

AFN staff will be busy preparing updated materials and an "action" list of what can be done right now to help. AFN wants the help of the US Department of Justice and we have to make our needs clear to them. We also need a better idea of what they are able to do to help. We will have more to share in the next issue of the AFN President's report as this develops.

### PUBLIC SAFETY: SAFE COMMUNITIES

Rural Alaska Native villages are increasingly in need of crisis relief due to extreme weather conditions. While timing of natural disasters cannot be predicted, communities must constantly work to meet the basic needs of its citizens. Fulfillment of basic needs like adequate housing, access to nutritious meals, sewage systems, and clean water are often taken for granted in the Lower 48; that is simply not the case in many rural Alaskan villages. Read the full text of related priorities and recommendations in the PDF appended to this report.

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## LEGISLATION & LITIGATION

### Resolutions 14-1, 14-2, 14-3, 14-7

The AFN Legislative and Litigation Committee is chaired by April Ferguson. They meet monthly to develop positions on both federal and state legislation and monitor court cases of interest to AFN. Here are some of the issues they considered at their last meeting:

**Resolution Opposing AK SJR 21, Constitutional Amendment of Judicial Council:** The Committee passed a resolution opposing SJR 21, which seeks to amend Alaska's Constitution to increase the number of members on the Judicial Council (the Council recommends candidates for judgeships in Alaska). AFN action was requested, in the form of a resolution opposing SJR 21, because Alaska Natives suffer from disproportionate rates of victimization, incarceration, etc. At present, the Council is composed of seven members: three attorneys, three non-attorneys, and the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court. SJR 21 seeks to triple this number to 16: five attorneys, 10 non-attorneys, and Alaska's Chief Justice, under the guise of increased regional representation. However, no Alaska Native or rural representation is provided for in the bill. The bill will likely pack Alaska's courts with conservative judges, which will negatively affect justice in Alaska.

**Resolution Supporting AK SB 161/HB 301, Autopsies and Death Certificates:** The Committee passed a resolution supporting SB 161/HB 301, which seeks to modify the manner in which the State Medical Examiner (SProgress UpdateME) performs medical death examinations and issues death certificates. AFN action was requested, in the form of a resolution supporting SB 161/HB 301, because rural Alaska Natives families frequently incur high funeral home costs after their loved ones are transported to Anchorage for SME examination. This is because Native families generally read the Release Authorization for Remains Form (RAF) — which is required for the SME to release the remains to the next-of-kin — to imply that the SME must transfer their loved one to a funeral home. However, this is not true, and families may elect to have their loved one released directly to them.

**Resolution Supporting AK HB 216, Official Languages of the State:** The Committee passed a resolution supporting HB 216, which seeks to add the Inupiaq, Siberian Yupik, Central Alaskan Yup'ik, Alutiiq, Unangax, Dena'ina, Deg Xinag, Holikachuk, Koyukon, Upper Kuskokwim, Gwich'in, Tanana, Upper Tanana, Tanacross, Hän, Ahtna, Eyak, Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian languages as official languages of the state. AFN action was requested, in the form of a supporting resolution, because only English is presently recognized as Alaska's official language.

**Resolution Opposing New EPA Guidelines regarding Technical Assistance:** The Committee also passed a resolution opposing new Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) guidelines that would require tribal consortiums to obtain a resolution of support from each of its member tribes before rendering the tribe technical assistance under the Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (IGAP). AFN action was requested, in the form of a resolution opposing the requirements, because it is unrealistic to expect Alaska's 229 federally recognized tribes to comply with the regulation, and this would, in turn, result in funding implications for Alaska's tribal consortia.

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## VOTING RIGHTS

Related to Resolution 13-36

### The Voting Rights Act \*

The Voting Rights Act (VRA), first enacted in 1965 with large bipartisan support, is a landmark law that prohibits discriminatory voting practices that have been responsible for the denial and abridgement of the voting rights of racial, ethnic, and language minorities in the US. This law has been responsible for much of the progress made to outlaw discriminatory voting practices in the US for over 50 years.

Congress has very strong constitutional authority under the 14th and 15th Amendments to protect voting rights. The VRA has been reauthorized four times, most recently in 2006, when President George W. Bush signed the bill into law. During the 2006 reauthorization of the VRA, Congress conducted more than 20 hearings, heard from over 90 expert witnesses, and collected more than 15,000 pages of testimony documenting the need for, and constitutionality of, the statute.

The heart of the VRA is Section 5, which requires covered jurisdictions to submit any proposed changes in voting procedures to the US Department of Justice for a determination of whether that change is discriminatory before the change goes into effect. This process is known as “preclearance”. Alaska has specifically been covered under this “preclearance” protection from the start.

### US Supreme Court Decision - Shelby County v Holder \*

In April, 2010, Shelby County, a largely white suburb of Birmingham, Alabama, filed suit in federal court in Washington DC, seeking to have Section 5 declared unconstitutional. Shelby County claimed that Congress did not have the required constitutional authority when it reauthorized Section 5 of the VRA in 2006. The State of Alaska joined a group of other states and filed an Amicus to the US Supreme Court urging this law be struck down.

On June 25, 2013, the US Supreme Court ruled in *Shelby County v Holder* that the coverage formula in Section 4(b) of the VRA, which was used to determine the states and political subdivisions subject to Section 5 preclearance, was unconstitutional.

### Initial Response to Shelby Decision \*

On January 16, 2014, Congress introduced a bill amending the VRA to ensure a modern, flexible and forward-looking set of protections that work together to provide an effective response to racial discrimination in voting in every part of the country. Representatives Jim Sensenbrenner (R-Wis.) and John Conyers (D-Mich.) co-sponsored the House version. Senate Judiciary Chair Patrick Leahy sponsored the Senate version.

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**WE NEED TO  
VOTE LIKE OUR  
LIFE DEPENDS  
UPON IT. BECAUSE  
IT DOES!**

- NATIVE LEADER

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The problem with this pending legislation is that Alaska Natives would have to file multiple and expensive lawsuits to regain preclearance coverage we have had for years. **It is not acceptable to AFN to see a proposal advance that essentially excludes Alaska Natives, Native Americans, Asians and Hispanic people, or one that causes us all to litigate in pursuit of basic coverage. There has to be a better way.**

### AFN's Initial Response

AFN signed on to a letter with other organizations including NARF, NCAI, Asian Americans Advancing Justice, Mexican American Legal Defense Fund, NALEO and others, calling for the reinstatement of the “known practices coverage formula” as a way to include more directly Alaska Natives and others. The ANCSA Regional CEO Association signed on to the letter, adding their support.

When the sponsors dropped this “known practices coverage formula”, they gave three reasons to AFN: 1) it was not acceptable to the House; 2) not acceptable to the DOJ; and 3) an independent law professor reported to the Chair of the Senate Judiciary that it was unconstitutional.

AFN, with the help of Alaska’s Congressional Delegation, went one step further. AFN requested Senators Murkowski and Begich pause in their consideration of signing on as co-sponsors until we have further information and answers.

The AFN Legislative & Litigation Committee ratified our actions and further urged that AFN be allowed to testify at any upcoming US Senate Judiciary Committee hearing on this bill.

AFN, together with NARF, is working with Senator Mark Begich on an amendment to the pending Senate bill. (See attached letter from Senator Mark Begich to the US Senate Judiciary Committee). AFN commends Senators Begich and Murkowski for their leadership and timely help. The Alaska Delegation’s congressional staff were wonderful with how quickly they stepped up to help.

To raise the visibility of the need to include Native Americans specifically in this legislation, **AFN planned a roundtable briefing for February 6th, at the US Senate Indian Affairs Committee.** AFN, NARF, & NCAI participated in this roundtable, as well as Senator Mark Begich and Wade Henderson, President of the Leadership Conference on Civil & Human Rights. The roundtable briefing provided an opportunity for Congressional staff to learn about some to other the real time obstacles Alaska Natives and American Indians voters continue to encounter. AFN showed a video clip of remote villages and their obstacles to getting to polling places to exercise their right to vote. Most of the Congressional staff have never been to Alaska, let alone to a village. It was important for them to get a sense of village Alaska.

A key message, and the reason for amending S. 1945, is that practices that have been abandoned for decades throughout most of the country still exist in Alaska and Indian Country. Such practices include removal of

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polling places, no allowance for early voting, and failure to provide language assistance. Staff from Alaska's Congressional delegation were in attendance, as well as staff from 19 other Congressional offices.

### Conclusion

We all know that once a discriminatory voting law goes into effect, voters are disenfranchised -- often for years before a court can put a stop to it. And there is often no way to remedy the injury to voters, given that what they lost is the equal opportunity to participate in an election which is now over.

AFN will continue our work to ensure the full participation of our people in voting now and in future years. We will work to include appropriate amendments in the new reform VRA bill. AFN will also participate with many other Native organizations to ensure our people are registered, informed and participating in the 2014 critical election cycle.

## VOTING RIGHTS ACTION PLAN

**AFN & NARF ARE EXPLORING AMENDMENTS THAT WOULD USE CONGRESS' UNIQUE INDIAN AFFAIRS POWERS TO SPECIFCALLY PROTECT THE VOTING RIGHTS OF NATIVE AMERICANS INCLUDING:**

1. IMPROVE IN-PERSON REGISTRATION AND VOTING OPPORTUNITIES IN RESERVATIONS AND NATIVE VILLAGES.
2. MANDATE ACCEPTANCE OF TRIBAL IDs UNDER APPLICABLE STATE OR LOCAL VOTER ID LAWS.
3. AMEND SECTION 8 OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT TO AUTHORIZE TRIBAL LEADERS TO REQUEST FEDERAL OBSERVERS FROM THE ATTORNEY GENERAL WHEN THEY ARE CONCERNED THE VOTING RIGHTS OF TRIBAL MEMBERS ARE AT RISK.
4. REQUIRE THE US DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE TO CONSULT WITH ALASKA NATIVE AND INDIAN TRIBES ABOUT VOTING ISSUES ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.
5. AMEND SECTION 203(C) OF THE VOTING RIGHTS ACT TO DELETE THE "HISTORICALLY UNWRITTEN" EXCEPTION FOR PROVIDING WRITTEN BILINGUAL MATERIALS IN ALASKAN NATIVE AND AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES.

\* Material extracted from briefing document prepared by the Leadership Conference Education Fund.

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## HONORING OUR CHILDREN DAY

The Alaska Federation of Natives' (AFN) is calling upon all Alaskans, this April 26th, to participate in the first-ever Honoring Our Children Day. Learn more at [nativefederation.org/hoc](http://nativefederation.org/hoc).

Honoring Our Children Day is an Alaska Native led, grassroots initiative intended to bring us together to grow strong, culturally connected, empowered, and loved children who are ready to lead us into the future.

On Honoring Our Children Day, we will:

- Celebrate and love our children as a community; let them know that we are here for them and working to make things better on their behalf.
- Share knowledge and expectations with our children about their importance in our communities, their role, and that we are standing beside them and want them to do their best.
- Do something together that is strength-based and not about 'problems', celebrating the bright light of our children in our communities.
- Come together to spend time, outside of school, work, and activities, to be social, engage with one another and promote our cultural connectivity.

The statewide effort will culminate in a day of ceremony and celebration. The event will utilize available social media, webcasts, radio, television and publications to connect the statewide participants. To participate in organizing meetings with the AFN CAAN Work Group and participating communities, contact:

Statewide Coordinator  
Sarah Simeonoff, (907) 677-1700,  
[sarahsimeonoff@firstalaskans.org](mailto:sarahsimeonoff@firstalaskans.org)

**HONORING OUR CHILDREN DAY**

**APRIL 26, 2014**



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## STAFF UPDATE

### New Faces and Promotions

#### Nicole Borromeo

AFN hired Nicole Borromeo as General Counsel in February 2013. Ms. Borromeo, a Doyon shareholder, holds a Bachelors degree from the University of Alaska-Anchorage, and a Juris Doctor degree from the University of Washington School of Law. Prior to joining AFN, she served as a Law Clerk to the Honorable Judge Patricia Collins (ret.), and worked as an Associate in the Anchorage office of Sonosky, Chambers, Sasche, Miller & Munson, LLP. Ms. Borromeo was raised in McGrath, but now resides in Anchorage with her husband Emmanuel, and son Kellan.



#### Jeffry Silverman

AFN has also hired Jeffry Silverman as Deputy Director of Communications. Silverman is an Anchorage-based filmmaker. His production company, Blueberry Productions, has produced award-winning cultural, social and historical documentaries and broadcasts for 20 years. He has served on several local arts boards and is currently an Affiliate Editor for Alaska Quarterly Review, a premier literary magazine published by the University of Alaska Anchorage. He lives in Anchorage with his wife Mary and two children, Max and Ellen. He is an honorary member of Alaska Native Brotherhood Camp 87.



#### Aurora Lehr

Aurora Lehr has been promoted to Vice-President. Since 2010 Ms. Lehr has served as Special Assistant to the President on Federal Indian Policy. Before joining AFN she held several positions with Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska, including Tribal Court Judge, Delegate representing Seattle, and Executive Council Youth Representative. She holds a Juris Doctor from the University of Washington School of Law and a Bachelor of Arts, Economics from the University of Washington. Raised in Mill Creek, Washington, Ms. Lehr has Tlingit, Hawaiian, German and Norwegian roots. She dances hula with Hula Hui Na Haumana O' Alaka and has been a lifelong member of Seattle Cape Fox Dancers.



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## THANK YOU

The challenges we face as a people have never been greater, nor has our shared commitment to overcoming these challenges ever been stronger. I hope you will take the time to review the strategic priorities and planning documents that accompany this report, share them with your communities, and engage with us where your strengths will best support our shared priorities. In 2014, we will rise as one. We will secure our basic rights and lay the foundation for our brightest possible future.



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

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ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

# LEADERSHIP RETREAT ON SUBSISTENCE

FEBRUARY 3, 2014  
DOWNTOWN MARRIOTT HOTEL  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA



*"It is important for us to rise up as an Alaska Native community and work together to find a path forward on subsistence."*

– TARA SWEENEY, AFN CO-CHAIR

Nothing is more important to Alaska Native peoples than protecting our subsistence way of life. Indeed, subsistence is at the core of our culture and identity. Alaska Native people perceive threats to subsistence as to threats to our cultural survival. As such, if we are to continue to survive as distinct cultures within the Alaskan society, our subsistence fishing, hunting, and gathering must continue to receive legal protection. The State of Alaska (state) is currently threatening this protection.

Specifically, in 2005, six years after the federal government implemented regulations allowing for federal management of subsistence and hunting of navigable waters on “public lands” (1999 rules) – as this term is defined in the Alaska National Interest Land Conservation Act (ANILCA) – the state challenged the 1999 rules’ definition of “public lands” in federal court. The definition presently grants rural Alaska residents a subsistence priority on public lands, which has been interpreted to mean “federal lands.” In 2013, the Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed the validity of the 1999 rules in *Alaska v. Jewell*.<sup>1</sup> The state immediately appealed the ruling to the U.S. Supreme Court.

To educate Alaska Native leaders on the Alaska Federation of Native’s (AFN) position in *Alaska v. Jewell*, AFN sponsored a *Leadership Retreat on Subsistence* (retreat) at the Downtown Marriott Hotel in Anchorage, Alaska on February 3, 2014. Approximately 150 leaders participated in the daylong, closed retreat. In brief, Alaska Native leaders were pleased with the quality of presenters and materials, and stand poised to pursue subsistence reform. Generous donations were also made to the AFN Subsistence Defense Fund. This report details the presentations given at the retreat, as well as the discussions that followed.

## EXECUTIVE CONCLUSION: LEADERS FAVOR CAPACITY BUILDING

AFN legal counsel identified four potential, high-priority legal and political options<sup>2</sup> available to AFN and Alaska Native leaders to achieve subsistence reform, including:

1. Federal Administrative Action. Pursing an Executive Order mandating federal and tribal co-management of fish and wildlife on public lands.
2. State Legislative Action. Pursing a state constitutional amendment authorizing a rural, Alaska Native, or “Native plus” subsistence priority.
3. Federal Legislative Action. Pursing an amendment to federal law authorizing the same.
4. Capacity Building. Focusing on what Alaska Native peoples can do ourselves, separate from federal or state action.

Leaders mostly favored the capacity building option, followed by the federal administrative action option, state legislative action option, and federal legislative action option.

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<sup>1</sup> 720 F.2d 1214 (9th Cir. 2013) (on petition for review to the U.S. Supreme Court).

<sup>2</sup> See § Legal and Political Options: *Alaska v. Jewell*.

<sup>3</sup> See § Legal Overviews: *Alaska v. Jewell*.

<sup>4</sup> 720 F.2d 1214 (9th Cir. 2013) (on petition for review before the U.S. Supreme Court).

## SUMMARY: EIGHT SUBSTANTIVE PRESENTATIONS

AFN Co-Chairs, Anna Hoffman and Tara Sweeny, and AFN Subsistence Committee Co-Chairs, Myron Naneng and Rosita Worl, carefully constructed the retreat agenda to ensure that Alaska Native leaders received a solid foundation in the legal and political aspects of subsistence reform through eight substantive presentations, including:

1. Purpose and Goals;
2. Legal Overview of *Alaska v. Jewell*;
3. Climate Change and Subsistence;
4. Legal and Political Options: *Alaska v. Jewell*;
5. Message from Alaska's Congressional Delegation;
6. Message from Secretary Jewell;
7. Message from NCAI; and
8. Political Analysis.

### Purpose and Goals

In addition to the purpose and goals outlined in the retreat materials, AFN President Julie Kitka noted the following purposes and goals:

- Educate the Alaska Native Community. Adequately educating each Alaska Native corporation, organization, Tribe, and individual on subsistence reform.<sup>3</sup>
- Protect the Alaska Native Community's Legal Right to Subsist. Vigorously defending the Alaska Native community's *legal* right to subsist in Congress, the federal courts, and other forums.
- Finish "Unfinished Business". Completely addressing any unsaid sentiment from the 2001 subsistence litigation (*e.g.*, civil rights era legalese were used against Alaska Native people to disenfranchise the Native community from our legal right to subsist).



<sup>3</sup> See § Legal Overview of *Alaska v. Jewell*.

## Legal Overview of *Alaska v. Jewell*

Robert Anderson, Legal Counsel for AFN, and Heather Kendall-Miller, Senior Staff Attorney, Native American Rights Fund (NARF), next presented an overview of *Alaska v. Jewell*,<sup>4</sup> more widely known as “the Katie John case.”



- *Alaska v. Jewell*. After distilling the 30-year history of the case, Mr. Anderson and Ms. Kendall-Miller told Alaska Native leaders that the state’s request focuses on the Supreme Court of the Ninth Circuit’s 2013 decision, which upholds federal control over fishing and hunting on navigable waters on “public lands” within the state. As noted above, “public lands” has been interpreted to mean “federal lands.” Thus, under ANILCA, rural residents receive a subsistence fish and wildlife priority over other residents on federal lands (roughly 60% of Alaska’s lands).
  - State’s Position. Mr. Anderson and Ms. Kendall-Miller then told retreat participants that the state’s current position is one of abridged sovereignty. That is, the Ninth Circuit erroneously intruded on Alaska’s sovereign right to manage fishing and hunting on navigable waters in over half of the state. The state retained Supreme Court expert – and former law partner of Chief Justice John Roberts – Gregory Garre to draft its petition for Supreme Court review.
  - AFN’s Position. Mr. Anderson and Ms. Kendall-Miller next told participants that AFN is a party to the case, and will principally argue that Supreme Court review is unwarranted, because this issue is not “extraordinarily important,” and because the lower courts are not “split” on the issue. They also assured Alaska Native leaders that AFN has an equally excellent legal team, including Supreme Court expert Carter Phillips. The team is hopeful that Chief Justice Roberts will recuse himself from deciding whether to grant or deny review, based on his relationship with Mr. Garre and his past position as the state’s attorney in the case. However, Mr. Anderson and Ms. Kendall-Miller could not publicly comment on AFN’s specific position, because they are still drafting AFN’s brief.
  - Next Steps. If the Supreme Court accepts *Alaska v. Jewell* for review, oral arguments will likely be held in October or November 2014, which would likely result in a decision four or five months later. Significant resources have been required for this litigation effort, and more will be needed if the Supreme Court accepts the case for review. If the Supreme Court denies review, the subsistence status quo will remain. That is, federal and

<sup>4</sup>

720 F.2d 1214 (9th Cir. 2013) (on petition for review before the U.S. Supreme Court).

state co-management of fish and wildlife will continue, and rural residents will continue to receive a subsistence priority on federal lands.

- Political Consequences for Governor Parnell. Ms. Kendall-Miller also noted that AFN and NARF “have been here before” with former Governor Tony Knowles. However, Governor Knowles decided against petitioning the Supreme Court for review after meeting with Katie John at her fish camp. She suspected his decision was due, in part, to his future political aspirations. Ms. Kendall-Miller then urged Alaska Native leaders to strongly consider whether Governor Sean Parnell should enjoy any type of political future in Alaska, since he has chosen to use state money to proceed against Alaska Native peoples in such a hostile manner.
- Comments. Leaders commented as follows at the culmination of Mr. Anderson and Ms. Kendall-Miller’s presentation:
  - It is imperative for AFN to pursue the Katie John case; Alaska Native leaders must form a united front on this issue.
  - Alaska Tribes are permitted to move tribal lands into trust; Tribes should do so and manage their own lands and resources.<sup>5</sup>
  - Alaskan politicians should absolutely face repercussions for failing to support Alaska Native issues.
  - Attorneys should examine international treaties to determine whether they bolster the Alaska Native peoples’ position on subsistence.

## Climate Change and Subsistence

Reggie Joule, Member, White House Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, next addressed the retreat participants, informing Alaska Native leaders that President Barack Obama recently created a 26 member Task Force on Climate Preparedness and Resilience, which includes two tribal representatives. Mr. Joule is one of these representatives.

- Unique Opportunity to Bring Alaska Native Issues Forward. Mr. Joule stated that, through the Task Force, he has a unique opportunity to bring Alaska Native issues to the Obama Administration. Climate change directly impacts subsistence. Thus, Mr. Joule strongly encouraged Alaska Native leaders to call on him in this regard. He also suggested that leaders should work together to form a united position on subsistence reform.
- Comments. Leaders commented as follows at the culmination of Mr. Joule’s address:
  - The federal government should assess the erosion problem for coastal villages.

<sup>5</sup> While Ms. Kendall-Miller acknowledged this is a true and correct statement of the law, she cautioned that the state is appealing the decision. As such, she questioned whether this a viable option to protect our right to subsist at this time.

- AFN should pressure Governor Parnell to revitalize the “Subcabinet on Climate Change.”

President Kitka then thanked Mr. Joule for his service on the Task Force, and said AFN’s 2014 strategy involves working closely with him in this position.

## Legal and Political Options: Alaska v. Jewell

AFN Legal Counsel Mr. Anderson, Rick Agnew, John “Sky” Starky, and Andrew Vanderjack next identified four legal and political options available to AFN and Alaska Native leaders to reform subsistence:

- Option 1 --- Pursuing an Executive Order Mandating Federal and Tribal Co-Management of Fish and Wildlife on Public Lands. Under this option, Alaska Native people would enjoy a greater participation capacity in management decisions, and may be able to engage the state in co-management. However, it would require a significant lobbying effort by AFN at the federal and state levels. It would also be subject to non-renewal by the next administration.
- Option 2 --- Pursuing a State Constitutional Amendment Authorizing a Rural, Alaska Native, or “Native Plus” Subsistence Priority on Public Lands. Under this option, rural residents would continue to enjoy a subsistence priority on public lands, and the state would be allowed to petition for fish and wildlife management on public lands. However, this too would require a significant lobbying effort by AFN, particularly at the state level.
- Option 3 --- Pursuing an Amendment to Federal Law Authorizing a Rural, Alaska Native, or “Native Plus” Subsistence Priority on Public Lands. Under this option, rural residents would continue to enjoy a subsistence priority on public lands, and the state would be allowed petition for fish and wildlife management on public lands. However, it would be time-consuming, expensive, and potentially politically divisive. It would also require significant lobbying by AFN, particularly at the federal and state levels.
- Option 4 --- Pursuing Native Organization Capacity Building without Regard to Federal or State Action. Under this option, Alaska Native leaders would rely on what Native peoples can themselves, using existing capacity and organizations structures; and, if necessary, form new inter-regional institutions. There are no apparent limitations to this option.

Mr. Starky then discussed the two Alaska Native fish and wildlife management proposals pending in Congress.

- Ahtna’s Co-Management Proposal. Ahtna is pursuing federal legislation to allow it to: (1) form a tribal commission to manage wildlife on Ahtna lands; and (2) co-manage wildlife on all lands within Ahtna’s region with the federal and state governments. The goal is to provide Ahtna with a seat at the management table.
- Yukon-Kuskokwim Inter-tribal Fish Commission Proposal. The Calista and Doyon regions are similarly pursuing federal legislation to: (1) consolidate the three different Yukon or Kuskokwim advisory fish committees into one commission; and (2) allow the commission to co-manage the

Yukon and Kuskokwim fisheries with the federal government. The goal is to provide the Calista and Doyon regions with a seat at the management table.

- Comments. Alaska Native leaders commented as follows at the culmination of Mr. Anderson, Mr. Agnes, Mr. Starky, and Mr. Vanderjack's presentation:
  - Alaska's tribal governments have the capacity to manage fish and wildlife; Alaska Native leaders must educate the state in this regard.
  - Alaska Native leaders should form commissions similar to the North West Fishing Commission (NWFC) headed by Billy Frank.<sup>6</sup>
  - Leaders should leverage other indigenous peoples on the subsistence issue, including Russian, Canadian, and Greenlandic peoples.<sup>7</sup>
  - Leaders should ask Alaska's federal delegation to write a joint letter to the state discouraging the latest Katie John litigation.
  - Leaders should ask political candidates where they stand on subsistence, and how they view the state's action in *Alaska v. Jewell*.
  - Alaska Tribes do not own land generally, so how would this be handled in terms of fish and wildlife management?

- *Mr. Agnew responded that, this is true; however, he also noted that Congress has the power to design the system any way it chooses. Also, Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporations could enter into memorandum of agreements with Alaska Tribes for tribal management. The main point is to be clear in what Alaska Native leaders want Congress to accomplish.*



<sup>6</sup> Mr. Anderson and Mr. Agnew agreed that Alaska Native commission management is ideal, but advised that the NWFC's authority is based on a treaty right, which precludes state jurisdiction. No such right exists in Alaska. However, the right may originate from federal law, which is what the Ahtna proposal is attempting to accomplish.

<sup>7</sup> Mr. Starky agreed that there are opportunities for international co-management with Russia, Canada, and Greenland, and noted there are existing models, which may be relied upon by Alaska Native leaders.

## Messages from Alaska's Congressional Delegation

**U.S. Senator Mark Begich** next addressed Alaska Native leaders in person, giving a brief account of his involvement in subsistence reform, noting the importance of voting, and providing updates on several pieces of federal legislation.

- Anchorage Assembly Passed Advisory Vote by 70%. In the 1990s, Senator Begich worked with the Anchorage Assembly to pass an advisory vote to put subsistence reform on the state ballot. The vote passed by a 70% margin. However, the state legislature ignored the vote.
- Farm Bill Provides for Subsistence Food Service. The Farm Bill includes a provision that allows subsistence food to be served in federal facilities.
- Appropriations Bill Provides Chinook Industry Relief. Senator Begich, together with Senator Murkowski, worked hard to ensure that last omnibus appropriations bill included \$75 million dollars for fishery disasters, including Alaska's Chinook industry.
- Magnuson-Steven Act Up for Reauthorization. Senator Begich is also working hard to recognize subsistence fishers in the reauthorization of the Magnuson-Stevens Act. Even sports fishers are commenting that subsistence uses are not adequately provided for. Senator Begich is also working hard to ensure Alaska salmon cannot be genetically engineered. He is also working on labeling guidelines, so consumers know where their seafood is coming from.
- Pebble Mine. Several subsistence users told Senator Begich that if the Pebble Mine was approved it would destroy their way of life. For this reason, and others, he publically opposed the mine. However, he does not oppose all mining, and was just up at Red Dog Mine.
- Vote Out Politicians Who Do Not Support Alaska Native Issues. As a final point, Senator Begich noted that another option for Alaska Native leaders to consider in the subsistence reform is electing politicians who support Alaska Native issues, and to increase the Native vote. By example, 10,000 Natives people are living in the Mat-Su borough, however, less than 20% vote, because they are still registered in their home villages. This has to change.



**Senator Lisa Murkowski** next addressed Alaska Native leaders via satellite feed, stating she generally supports subsistence reform. She also provided several other remarks.

- Obama Administration is Directive, Not Collaborative. Senator Murkowski said that she is observing Washington, D.C. is tell Alaska what it can and cannot do with increased frequency.
- Subsistence Dialog February 20th in Anchorage. Senator Murkowski announced her February 20th subsistence dialog at the University of Alaska Anchorage, starting at 1:00 p.m. to discuss co-management. Senator Murkowski conceded that federal and state co-management is not working, but said she disfavors federal legislation as her preferred alternative to correct this problem in the current political climate.
- Chinook Disaster Funds. As noted above, Senators Murkowski and Begich successfully secured \$75 million for fisheries disasters, including Alaska's Chinook fishing industry. However, the funds fall short of the need; thus, Alaska Native leaders must be creative in how the funds are spent. The Arctic-Yukon-Kuskokwim Sustainable Salmon Initiative has a good approach.
- Opportunities to Raise the Subsistence Issue in Washington, D.C. President Obama's nominee for Assistant Secretary of Fish and Wildlife, Rhea Suh, will soon appear before Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee, and Senator Murkowski intends to pepper her with questions about her view on subsistence. Senator Murkowski also made sure that the White House Congressional Liaison, Katherine Fallon, understands that subsistence reform is a priority for Alaska Native people.
- Disappointed Secretary Jewell Did Not Participate. Finally, Senator Murkowski remarked that she was disappointed Interior Secretary Sally Jewell did not participate in the retreat, and said she informed Ms. Fallon it would have been particularly helpful for Secretary Jewell to weigh in, and assure Alaska's Native people that the Obama administration is aware of the issue.

**Congressman Don Young** next addressed retreat participants via satellite feed, noting he too generally supports subsistence reform. He also provided updates on several pieces of federal legislation.

- Farm Bill to Permit Service of Subsistence Foods. Congressman Young reported that he was able to amend the Farm Bill to allow for the service of subsistence foods in federal facilities. He also said the House rejected the Senate's \$40 billion cut to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), which directly benefits 95,000 Alaskans.



- Bird Feather Bill to Prohibit Prosecution of Artists. Congressman Young is working to add a provision to the Bird Feather Bill that precludes the prosecution of artists who use “road kill” birds for art.
- Hearing Scheduled for Ahtna Co-Management Proposal. Congressman Young said he is looking forward to a “very interesting” hearing on Ahnta’s co-management proposal. However, he estimates it may be hard for his colleagues to support. Therefore, Congressman Young suggests that Ahtna initiate a state campaign on the issue. He also said that he wants “good testimony” when the proposal comes before the House Natural Resources Committee, with solid solutions.

### **Message from Interior Secretary Jewell**

Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell appeared via a pre-recorded message, and apologized to AFN and retreat participants for being unable to attend in person. She also expressed her interest in working closely with Alaska Native leaders on the subsistence issue to ensure that the Interior Department is fulfilling its trust obligation to Alaska Native Tribes. Finally, Secretary Jewell encouraged Alaska Native leaders to bring their questions and comments regarding subsistence reform to Alaska’s congressional delegation.

### **Message from NCAI**

Jackie Johnson-Pata, President, National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) next presented on the Tribal Supreme Court Project, and offered suggestions on how Alaska Native leaders might move subsistence reform forward.

- Tribal Supreme Court Project. In 2001, Ms. Johnson and other NCAI officials noticed that the Supreme Court was increasingly ruling against Indian tribes, and negatively affecting tribal sovereignty. Therefore, NCAI met with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) to determine how the NAACP effectively litigated during the civil rights era. NAACP officials responded that it only took cases would set favorable precedent. NCAI then partnered with NARF to put together a network of attorneys to promote greater coordination, and to improve strategy on litigation that could affect the rights of all Indian tribes.
- Other Suggestions for the Subsistence Reform. Ms. Johnson-Pata echoed Senator Begich’s sentiment regarding the needed for Alaska Native peoples to ensure and exercise the rights to vote. She also suggested Alaska Native leaders should present Alaska’s congressional delegation with minimal, targeted “asks,” as opposed to a laundry lists of “wants;” but start drafting desired legislation so that it is readily available. Finally, Ms. Johnson-Pata said that Department of Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack is “passionate” about tribal issues, and is considering his legacy. He would be a great resource in addition to, or exclusive of, Secretary Jewell.

## Political Analysis

Chris McNeil, President and CEO, Sealaska Corporation, and Richard “Dick” Trudell, Executive Director, American Indian Resources Institute next provided Alaska Native leaders with a political analysis of the subsistence issue.

- Alaska Native Tribes are in “Retail Mode” with Congress. Mr. McNeil observed that the manner in which Tribes interact with Congress has changed. Tribes are now in a “retail mode,” meaning each and every congressional office must be canvassed, because Senator Ted Stevens is no longer able to include riders on appropriations bills.
- Tribes Must be Proactive, Not Reactive. Mr. McNeil also observed that Tribes tend to be reactive, as opposed to proactive. This must change.
- Link Subsistence to Other Tribal Issues for Maximum Support. Mr. Trudell suggested Alaska Native leaders link the subsistence fight to other important tribal issues, such as water rights, equality, and climate change to engage other Tribes with those issues. This, says Mr. Trudell, will allow leaders to access a larger pool of congressional members. Mr. Trudell also stressed that Tribes should attempt to solve problems in Congress as opposed to the courts, because Tribes lose control in the courts.
- Obama Administration is Becoming a Lame Duck Administration. Mr. Trudell further opined that the Obama administration is becoming a lame duck administration, and questioned the reality of an Executive Order on subsistence. As an alternative, he suggested a Secretarial Order, but noted the process is lengthy generally.
- ANCSA Corporations Must Allocate Resources. As a final point, Mr. Trudell remarked that if subsistence reform really is important to the Alaska Native people, then the ANCSA corporations “should be throwing money at the issue to build a war chest.”

## CONCLUSION

The AFN Subsistence Committee will next work to incorporate the questions and comments from the retreat into AFN’s overall strategy or subsistence reform.



*“We are going to be unrelenting in the fight for our subsistence rights and subsistence protections.”*

-- DR. ROSITA WORL, AFN SUBSISTENCE COMMITTEE CO-CHAIR

**Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc.**  
**Food Security and Subsistence Resources Strategic Plan Next Steps**  
**February 12, 2014**

**Major Actions: February 2014 – April 2014**

1. Communicate strategic plan out to Native leadership around the state. Develop region-specific subsistence binders.
2. Develop targeted public relations effort to inform Alaskans about subsistence. Show positives of subsistence. Make the issue what's good for AK, not just AK Natives.
3. Work with the delegation to get the Ahtna and Inter-tribal Fish Commission bills introduced and passed. Prepare testimony and testify at the upcoming House Resource Committee hearing. Schedule meetings with key staff members of the House Resources Committee prior to and after the hearing. Ask the State to support demonstration projects such as these.
4. Gather case studies on co-management and other possible demonstration projects. Advocate for the creation or evolution of Native entities that could ramp up to be ready to do this work. Include as attachments to testimony and share at upcoming roundtable.
5. Convene a technical drafting group. Prepare a draft Executive Order, best possibility. Draft justification. Advocate for an Executive Order mandating co-management between the Federal Government and Alaska Natives. Focus outreach on White House, OMB, and the Interior and Agriculture Departments.
6. Continue to identify and advocate for interim steps the President and his Administration can take, including additional reforms to the FSB and ensuring adequate funding for subsistence management. Focus on the budget. Provide suggestions to our delegation and appropriations staff.
7. Meet with key Alaska legislators to gauge the likelihood and timeframe of passing a state constitutional amendment.

**Major Actions: May 2014 – August 2014**

1. Work with other Native organizations who are focused on Get Out the Native Vote. Support local efforts.
2. Plan and conduct a candidates forum for primary statewide races around the NCAI mid-year conference this summer.
3. Plan and conduct a statewide candidates forum for general election at the convention. Work closely with the AFN Convention Committee.
4. Raise resources.
5. Implement public relations effort on subsistence in Alaska.

**Additional Items if the US Supreme Court takes *State v. Jewell*: May 2014 – August 2014**

1. Request and schedule key meetings with national and local editorial boards and national coalitions. Prepare materials and prep representatives to attend.
2. Develop targeted public relations effort in Alaska to inform the Native community of what is happening, and how they can be involved.
3. Implement targeted public relations effort to educate Alaskans and build support. Consider a statewide poll questions to monitor public opinion. Evaluate pros, cons and costs.
4. Raise needed resources immediately.
5. Training/coaching sessions for AFN staff and regional representatives who will be involved in the statewide effort.

## **Additional Items if the US Supreme Court Declines Case: May 2014 – August 2014**

1. State Constitutional Amendment:
  - a. Rebuild diplomatic relationship with state.
  - b. Explore serious options which might be successful.
  - c. Educate legislators on a politically viable path forward to amending the state constitution.
  - d. Engage in statewide campaign regarding subsistence and a constitutional amendment.
2. Rural Determination: Advocate for revisions to the methodology used to review rural/nonrural status of communities in Alaska.
3. Management on Native Lands: Advance and support region-specific legislative proposals that ensure the opportunity for Native management of subsistence resources on Native lands, and a unified management system throughout tribal traditional hunting and fishing territory through co-management.
4. International Efforts to Protect Alaska Native rights to food security: Join with the Navajo Nation in strategy meetings to advance a clear agenda to the World Conference on Indigenous Peoples in NY in September, 2014.
5. MMPA: Seek Amendments to Section 119 MMPA that will enhance co-management and revisions to regulations defining “significantly altered” in the context of determining what constitutes an “authentic Native handicraft” under the MMPA.
6. Duck Stamp: Amendment to the Duck Stamp Act to exempt the customary and traditional subsistence harvest of migratory birds in Alaska.
7. AMBCC: Work with Native members of the AMBCC to increase their management capacity and strengthen their management role.
8. Migratory Birds: Amendments to federal laws and treaties to provide full protection of customary and traditional Native uses of migratory birds.
9. NPFMC: Advocate for additional research concerning the Chinook and Chum salmon by-catch in the Bering Sea Pollock fishery and in the Russian Economic Zone, and urge NPFMC to adopt management measures through consultation with affected tribes, including review of Chinook salmon by-catch management measures and on habitat protection for the Zhemchug and Pribilof Canyons

### Possible Speakers' Bureau

- Nicole Borromeo
- Maude Blair
- Julie Kitka
- Ana Hoffman, BNC
- Tara Sweeney, ASRC
- Myron Naneng, AVCP
- Carol Brown, AVCP
- Rosita Worl, Sealaska
- Michelle Anderson, Ahtna
- Dan Cheyette, BBNC
- Rose Barr, NANA
- Robert Sanderson, Southeast Villages
- Melissa Borton, Afognak

### Possible Great Non-Native Spokesmen

- Former Governor Tony Knowles
- Greg Roczicka, Orutsararmiut Native Council
- Sky Starkey
- David Voluck



February 20, 2014

Daniel Ashe, Director  
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service  
Marine Mammals Management Office  
1011 East Tudor Road, MS-341  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

RE: USFWS November 2013 Guidance on “Significantly Altered”

On behalf of the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN), I would like to comment on the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Clarification of the Phrase “Significantly Altered” as it Pertains to Items made from Sea Otter that was issued in November 2013.

We are concerned that the guidelines are non-binding, and we feel that the guidance and pictures are not enough to know if many of the handicrafts or clothing items made from sea otter will be considered “significantly altered.” Because we don’t feel the guidance covers enough, we are also concerned about consistency of enforcement.

We understand that FWS is working to put FAQs about the guidance on its website and is trying to find a way that artists and craftsmen can easily check with FWS to find out if something will be considered “significantly altered.” We recommend that FWS work with the Indigenous Peoples Council on Marine Mammals (IPCoMM) on these clarifications and questions, and that both groups consider giving IPCoMM some decision-making authority to determine if a handicraft or item of clothing made of sea otter meets the guidelines or not.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

Julie Kitka, President  
Alaska Federation of Natives, Inc.

cc: AFN Board of Directors  
Mike Miller, Chair, Indigenous People's Council for Marine Mammals  
Sally Jewell, Secretary of the Interior  
Geoffrey Haskett, USFWS Regional Director, Alaska



**Big Brothers Big Sisters**  
of Alaska

*Little Moments. Big Magic.<sup>TM</sup>*

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October 29, 2013

Ms. Julie Kitka, President  
Alaska Federation of Natives  
1577 C Street, Suite 300  
Anchorage, AK 99501

Dear Ms. Kitka,

I hope to have the opportunity to meet and share information about the Big Brothers Big Sisters (BBBS) Alaska Native Mentoring Initiative with you and if possible the AFN Board. BBBS has implemented the Success through Education and Cultural Connections Project (SECC) in Fairbanks, Anchorage, and Juneau. It is designed to provide academic and social-emotional support to Alaska Native students at high risk of academic failure based on 3rd Grade Standards Based Assessment scores.

We hope to match the youth with an Alaska Native mentor to form a supportive long lasting one-to-one mentoring relationship. Our goal is to increase the number of Alaska Native volunteers. Currently thirty percent of the youth we serve are Alaska Native whereas only five percent of our volunteers are Alaska Native.

Our Board of Directors is committed to improving and increasing our services to Alaska Native youth, and we would very much like to engage AFN in this effort. We share a common mission to foster and encourage preservation of Alaskan Native culture and advocate for programs which instill pride and confidence in Alaska Native youth.

May we meet with you or your designee to discuss ways we might work more closely together to serve more Alaska Native children? As you know, mentoring can help children develop pride in their heritage, enthusiasm for learning, and the kind of supportive connections that help them make better choices and avoid risky behaviors.

Thank you for your time. I was once a Little sister myself so I am very passionate about this initiative. I cannot express the positive impact that BBBS had on my life. I am proof that this is an effective intervention for children facing adversity or any child who needs another supportive relationship in their life. Together we can change lives and change communities.

Sincerely,

Renee Linton  
Alaska Native Mentoring Partnership Manager

# Community Reception

February 11, 2014 | 5:00pm-7:00pm  
Sealaska Corporation



Alaska Federation  
of Natives

CULTURE  
INNOVATION

HISTORY  
TRADITION  
PROGRESS



# Program

## Welcome

AFN Co-Chairs Ana Hoffman & Tara Sweeney

## Invocation

## Dance Group

Yees Ku Oo

## Introduction of AFN Board and Special Guests

## Recognition of Members of the Alaska State Legislature

## Honorees

Miranda Wright and Gordon Pullar

CATERING PROVIDED BY  
Alaska Native Sisterhood Glacier Valley Camp 70

# Honoring

## **Gordon L. Pullar, PhD – Kodiak Island Sugpiaq**

Gordon L. Pullar, PhD, is an Associate Professor who was instrumental in the design and implementation of UAF's Rural Development MA program; as such, he was taught classes on indigenous issues such as identity, land claims, leadership and organization management. A Kodiak Island Sugpiaq he serves on the Tangirnaq Native Village Tribal Council and the Alutiiq Museum Board. He is past President and CEO of the Kodiak Area Native Association and past Chairman of the Koniag Education Foundation. While a member of the Board of Alaska Federation of Natives, he served on the Legislative Committee that worked with Congress to secure the important "1991 Amendments" to ANCSA. He lectured worldwide and published extensively on indigenous issues. He co-edited Looking Both Ways: Heritage and Identity of Alutiiq People and recently published a chapter in Native Cultures of Alaska. He holds a PhD in Organizational Anthropology, a Master of Public Administration Degree, and a BA in Anthropology. He was the first recipient of the Anayuquq Oscar Kawagley Educators Award in 2013.

## **Miranda Wright, Associate Professor & Director of DANSRD – Nulato, Alaska**

Miranda Wright, Associate Professor and Director of DANSRD, is a Koyukon Athabascan from Nulato, AK. Prof. Wright holds an MA in Cultural Anthropology from UAF and is in pursuit of a PhD in Interdisciplinary Studies. She has over 30 years' experience as a private business owner. Prof. Wright is currently a member of the Doyon Board of Directors, an ANCSA regional corporation. She also served on the Board of her ANCSA Village Corporation and was instrumental in the merger of four village corporations into Gana-A Yoo' Limited. Prof. Wright has served on numerous boards and committees focused on economic development and native education. Prof. Wright and her husband Gareth make their home in Fairbanks along with a large extended family.



## YEES KU OO

+Yees Ku Oo was founded in October 2003. We are a multi-cultural group from different nations: Tlingit, Aleut, Alutiiq, Haida, Inupiat, Tsimshian, Yupik, and Navajo.

The Tlingit name Yees Ku oo means New People/ New Beginnings. The name was given to us by the late Clarence Jackson.

We obtain permission to use each song and love sharing our songs and dances.



COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS  
COMMITTEE ON  
HOMELAND SECURITY AND  
GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS  
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON EMERGENCY  
MANAGEMENT, INTERGOVERNMENTAL  
RELATIONS, AND THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

MARK BEGICH  
ALASKA

COMMITTEE ON  
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION  
CHAIRMAN, SUBCOMMITTEE ON OCEANS,  
ATMOSPHERE, FISHERIES AND COAST GUARD  
COMMITTEE ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE ON INDIAN AFFAIRS

United States Senate  
WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 20, 2014

The Honorable Patrick Leahy  
Chairman  
Senate Judiciary Committee  
224 Dirksen Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510-0001

Dear Senator Leahy:

I write regarding your just introduced legislation, S. 1945, which would restore the intended fairness of the Voting Rights Act (VRA) by strengthening federal preclearance provisions for states and jurisdictions with a history of disenfranchising minority voters.

As you know, the Supreme Court decision to strike historic preclearance formulas was disastrous for current and potential voters in many states, including Alaska. I appreciate your leadership on this issue, and I understand the tightrope you must walk while responding to the court's ruling, working to reinstate key provisions of the VRA and trying to win the bipartisan support necessary to get your bill through Congress. Still, it is troubling that as I review S. 1945 over the holiday weekend set aside to honor one of our country's greatest civil rights leaders, the solutions proposed so far still do not protect many minority voters.

I thank your committee staff for sharing their concerns about the "Known Practices Coverage" (KPC) formula that has been offered as a response to the Supreme Court decision by various constituencies, including some within Alaska. Yet I am concerned that this language was not included in the first draft of your bill. My staff and I are working to address concerns that have been raised with the KPC and want to inform you of my intent to offer an amendment that will meet the needs of the Native American/Alaska Native community.

The stakes are especially high for many of my constituents because the State of Alaska, led by the current administration, filed an amicus brief to the Supreme Court in support of lessening protections within the VRA and has worked to make it more difficult for Alaska Natives to vote. Any solution to revitalize the protections of that law must come from Congress. As a longtime champion of

Senator Patrick Leahy

January 20, 2014

Page 2

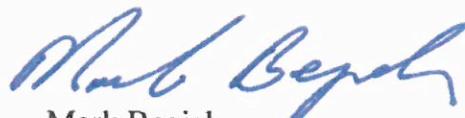
civil rights in the Senate, you are likely aware that Alaska Natives were the last indigenous group within the United States granted the right to vote. Many Alaska Native elders remember not so long ago when there were signs in our state capital distinctively marking, "No Dogs and No Natives Allowed" on community buildings and storefronts.

I appreciate your close review, leadership and attention to this issue. My understanding is the bill as currently written will only trigger coverage and preclearance for several Southern states and offers very little to the Alaska Native community, other than a transparency provision that requires notice of voting changes. This is cold comfort considering that the burden is entirely on the voter to find out about such changes, and to find and pay for an attorney to gather evidence before going to federal court to stop practices that disenfranchise voters.

You will not be surprised to know I am planning to offer alternative language to address concerns raised by the Native American Rights Fund, the Alaska Federation of Natives, the National Congress of American Indians and other key groups. Our intent is to prevent practices that unfortunately have still occurred in Alaska: closure of polling places, removal of absentee voting or early voting opportunities, and the decrease or removal of language assistance for voters who speak a language other than English, to name a few.

I know you agree that every American deserves to vote unimpeded by these questionable practices and that it is time we correct this for all voters, not just those in certain parts of the country. I look forward to engaging with you further as S. 1945 moves through the Senate legislative process.

Sincerely,



Mark Begich  
United States Senator



## PUBLIC SAFETY: WOMEN, CHILDREN, AND VULNERABLE CITIZENS

Protecting women, children, and vulnerable citizens from violence and abuse is one part of ensuring rural Alaskans are safe in their home communities. Following the release of the Indian Law & Order Commission's "Roadmap for Making Native America Safer" in 2013, new opportunities are available for community members, leaders, and lawmakers to work together to increase public safety in Alaska. Senator Begich called findings of report on safety in rural Alaska "horrific" and says he "refuse[s] to let the report recommendations get filed away and forgotten." AFN's Council for the Advancement of Alaska Natives identified the following State goals to increase public safety for all Alaskans:

- Examine and consider recommendations made by the Indian Law and Order Commission Report, "Roadmap for Making Native America Safer" by holding a hearing in the House and Senate Judiciary committees. Strengthen coordination with tribal courts to become involved with law enforcement and modernize the VPSO program.
- Support amendments to S. 1454, the "Alaska Safe Families and Villages Act of 2013," that encourage the State of Alaska to make intergovernmental agreements with Indian tribes in Alaska and repeal section 910 of the Violence Against Women Act. 2013 *AFN Resolution 13-08*
- Urge the governor to consider the full impact of potential Medicaid expansion on rural Alaskans and take complete advantage of federal resources to expanding Medicaid coverage to improve the health of Alaskans and to improve the Alaska economy. 2013 *AFN Resolution 13-18*
- Support the establishment of alcohol and drug treatment centers, placement and transitional homes, and homeless shelters in each of the regional communities that expands treatment options for Alaska Native individuals and families. 2013 *AFN Resolutions 13-20, 13-21, 13-22*



## PUBLIC SAFETY: SAFE COMMUNITIES

Rural Alaska Native villages are increasingly in need of crisis relief due to extreme weather conditions. In 2013, Kotlik and many other Western Alaska villages experienced a series of violent storms and flooding. Galena also experienced flooding, with 90% of its structures damaged or destroyed. These recent activities compel us to establish systematic approaches to lend immediate help for rural communities in need.

While timing of natural disasters is unknown, communities must constantly work to meet the basic needs of its citizens. Fulfillment of basic needs like adequate housing, access to nutritious meals, sewage systems, and clean water are often taken for granted in the Lower 48; that is simply not the case in many rural Alaskan villages.

- Form an immediate response system to facilitate rapid response from legislators to declare disaster relief at the local, state, and federal levels when disasters have occurred in rural areas.
- Educate on the link of rising temperatures on the public safety of rural Alaskans who live in coastal areas. Form workgroups that research the extent that rising temperatures have altered migration patterns and fish and game availability across the state.
- Continue work of the Governor's sub-cabinet on climate change. Support the resurrection of the Immediate Action Workgroup and reinstate the past workgroup members. *2013 AFN Resolution 13-25*
- Encourage regulation that includes the distribution of traditional foods for elders or rural schools in government-funded programs.
- Support legislation that phases out persistent bio-accumulative chemicals and those linked to birth defects, cancer, genetic harm, endocrine disorders, immune and neurological damage by using safer alternatives. *2013 AFN Resolution 13-23*
- Increase enforcement against dangerous drugs such as heroin and methamphetamines. Seek creative solutions and partnerships to reduce substance abuse, such as the "Choose Respect" initiative to bolster community awareness. Partner with rural air carriers, fish processing companies and municipal governments in hub communities for better airport and boat harbor screening. Recognize tribal authority and defer cases, particularly juvenile cases, to tribes. *2013 AFN Resolution 13-24*



## HONORING OUR CHILDREN DAY

The Alaska Federation of Natives' (AFN) Council for the Advancement of Alaska Natives (CAAN) is calling upon all Alaskans, this April 26<sup>th</sup>, to participate in the Honoring Our Children Day. CAAN and its members issue this statewide invitation for collaborative, community action to celebrate and share our collective love, respect, and belief in the importance of our children.

This day will be an Alaska Native led, grassroots initiative where all in our communities are welcome to participate so long as children are at the center. The goal of this statewide effort is to bring us together so that we grow strong, culturally connected, empowered, and loved children who are ready to lead us into the future.

### PURPOSE

- Celebrate and love our children as a community; let them know that we are here for them and working to make things better on their behalf.
- Share knowledge and expectations with our children about their importance in our communities, their role, and that we are standing beside them and want them to do their best.
- Do something together that is strength based and not about 'problems', celebrating the bright light of our children in our communities.
- Come together to spend time, outside of school, work, and activities, to be social, engage with one another and promote our cultural connectivity.

The statewide effort will culminate in a day of ceremony and celebration within each community. This is a grassroots effort and participants are asked to keep this event fun, meaningful, and not overly complicated. The event will utilize available social media, webcasts, radio, television and publications to connect the statewide participants on April 26th. A Statewide Coordinator will host organizing meetings with the AFN CAAN Work Group and participating communities.

Statewide Coordinator: Stephen Blanchett, (907) 677-1700, [stephenblanchett@firstalaskans.org](mailto:stephenblanchett@firstalaskans.org)



**Council for the Advancement of Alaska Natives  
Annual Priorities**

**Alaska Federation of Natives**  
1577 C Street, Suite 300  
Anchorage, AK 99501  
907.274.3611  
[www.nativefederation.org](http://www.nativefederation.org)



## EDUCATING ALASKA NATIVES

Alaska's public education system must be improved to meet the needs of all Alaskan children. Alaska Natives constitute 19.5% of the state's population, and 23% of its school population. Alaska Native students are dropping out of school at a rate of 7.8%, which is twice the rate of other students. Native youth are graduating from high school at a rate of only 47%. In the past several years, regions with Native enrollments greater than 80% often had the lowest proportion of schools meeting the Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks under the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), and the percentage of Native students passing the reading, writing and math benchmark exams is below all other students statewide.

These statistics compel us to seek a new approach to education for Alaska Natives. Part of the reason for poor academic achievement among Native students is the lack of culture-based programs. State law must give us the flexibility to integrate Native culture into the curriculum in our schools.

- Coordinate efforts between the Department of Education & Early Development and local organizations to provide a dedicated, scheduled homework club or tutoring session in every junior and senior high school in Alaska.
- Participate and encourage communities to participate in the Honoring Our Children Day on April 26, 2014.
- Improve the Alaska Performance Scholarship by removing impediments from Alaska Natives and rural students' participation to make quality higher education equally available to all Alaskans. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-05*
- Rename 4 AAC 33.090 as follows: District-operated or non-profit operated residential programs that deliver in-district, regional, or statewide residential education programs. Amend language to provide student stipend funding to approved in-district and regional residential educational programs. Establish an annual application period for districts wishing to establish residential schools in compliance with 4 AAC 33.090. Ensure that Alaska Native Organizations are driving residential programs for the benefit of Alaska Native students. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-44*



## ACCESS TO RESOURCES

The nation has begun to feel the impacts of sequestration, an impact magnified for those who rely upon federal funding, like Alaska Native tribes. AFN urges the State to make investments in programs that support tribal self-determination and promote economic development in rural Alaska. Rural Alaska as an "emerging economy" similar to other countries around the world. As an "emerging economy", we experience more drastic impacts from recessions. The 2010 census estimates indicate that a poverty rate of 13.6% exists in rural Alaska, compared to a 9.8% level in urban areas of the state. Effective economic stimulus programs must be tailored to the unique circumstances in rural Alaska. While timing of natural disasters is unknown, communities must constantly work to meet the basic needs of its citizens. Fulfillment of basic needs like adequate housing, access to nutritious meals, sewage systems, and clean water are often taken for granted in the Lower 48; that is simply not the case in many rural Alaskan villages.

- Fund indirect costs for contracts/grants at grantee agencies' federally approved indirect cost rates. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-30*
- Ensure Alaska Rural Communications Service is provided sufficient funds to convert to digital services by the Federal Communications Commission deadline. Modernize the aging infrastructure to make sure that ARCS viewers in bush and rural Alaska can continue to receive vital, over the air television service after the Federally Mandated Analog Transmitter turn-off date of September 1, 2015. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-34*
- Authorize funding to support the Denali Commission Transportation Program, which is designed to provide critical utilities, infrastructure, and economic support throughout rural Alaska. Support at the level it was once funded by the federal government in SAFETEA-LU. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-31*
- Focus on transportation planning, a state priority consideration, for marine projects such as docks and harbors for Alaska's rural communities that are considered essential to supporting Essential Marine Transportation and resource-based industries. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-33*
- Retain and increase the appropriation for Alaska Legal Services Corporation (ALSC) in the proposed FY 2014 budget to support ALSC's mission of providing free legal services on vital issues to low income Alaskans. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-36*

- Consider alternative solutions to increase Identification Card services to village residents who are unable to travel to DMVs in hub communities to receive cards. *2013 AFN Resolution 13-34*
- Oppose HB 3 and HB 104. House Bill 3 seeks to require Voting ID, while there is a large number of people in rural Alaska who do not have government issued ID. House Bill 104 seeks to move the primary election date to the second week of August, when a large number of people in rural Alaska are subsistence hunting and fishing. *2013 AFN Resolution 13-36*
- Examine the feasibility of the All Alaska Energy Project and commit state resources to developing this project to free all Alaskans from the crippling burdens of expensive energy. Interconnect Alaska communities regionally to immediately benefit from economies of scale possible from the aggregation of electrical loads so that regional grids are able to receive North Slope power immediately when the backbone grid is constructed. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-12*
- Return legislation similar to HB 294 in the next legislative session and restore Power Cost Equalization to 1998 levels. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-25*
- Support programs and funding for weatherization throughout the State of Alaska. Invest in heating systems and pilot projects that use local sources such as biomass to reduce imported diesel and support cost savings. Enact legislation for long-term energy relief in rural Alaska. *2013 AFN Resolution 13-30*
- Receive annual training and other education, explaining that land held by Native Corporations is private land and not for public use or taking by the State of Alaska, and that employees must first contact and engage the Native Corporation in all activities and seek permission to access its lands. AFN supports language put forward by AHTNA regarding State relinquishment of RS 2477 rights of way. *2012 AFN Resolution 12-29*