

Alaska Federation of Natives

Statewide Briefing



Week of September 27 - October 1, 2021

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Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Workshop on Wednesday, October 6 — Legislation Still Pending in U.S. Congress

On Wednesday, October 6, senior staff from the Office of U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski and the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs will host a workshop on the key provisions in the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (H.R. 3684) for AFN members.

H.R. 3684 is bipartisan legislation to invest in our nation's infrastructure. More specifically, the legislation provides \$550 billion in new federal funding for roads, bridges, rail, transit, ports, airports, energy, water systems, and broadband.

This workshop will be an excellent opportunity to learn more about this historic legislation. There will be time for Q&A, but time is limited for this workshop. If you have questions or comments that you would like to share in advance, please contact Benjamin Mallott at bmallott@nativefederation.org.

When: Wednesday, October 6, 2021

Time: 9:00 to 10:00 AM Alaska time (1:00 to 2:00 pm EST)

Where: Virtual (Zoom) - [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#)

Additional information on H.R. 3684:

- [Senate Committee on Indian Affairs summary of H.R. 3684](#)
- [Alaska-specific summary of H.R. 3684](#)

If you are an AFN delegate and not on our mailing list, click [HERE](#) to be added for future communications and invitations like this.

Alaska Redistricting Board to Hold Public Hearings in Northwest Arctic and Southeast this Week

The Alaska Redistricting Board has adopted six draft plans, all of which propose new boundaries for the state's 40 legislative districts based on 2020 census data.

Alaskans are now invited to weigh in.

Public hearings have been planned in more than 15 communities throughout the state, including the following Northwest Arctic and Southeast communities this week:

- **Kotzebue - Tuesday, October 5**
- **Ketchikan - Wednesday, October 6**
- **Petersburg - Thursday, October 7**
- **Wrangel - Thursday, October 7**

Alaskans who participate in the meetings will have an opportunity to speak directly with Board members and staff to learn about how their House and Senate districts may change.

The Board has learned a lot from the first week of public hearings and received a few suggestions on how to make the process better.

Open House: The Board adopted six proposals for public input – these proposals have 40 district maps each in addition to the six regional/statewide maps, which equates to 276 maps to review. There has been a lot of confusion about what is in which map for which proposal and the Open House format allows attendees to view large format printed maps, spend as much time as they want comparing the maps, have staff assistance viewing the interactive maps on the website, and ask detailed questions of the Board members who are there. This format has been very informative to attendees and the Board plans to keep it available in addition to receiving in-person testimony.

Written testimony: Since only a few board members will be at each public hearing, written testimony is encouraged as it allows all testimony to be distributed quickly to all board members. Board members have also found that referring to written testimony is especially helpful when going back to the map drawing board. You can submit testimony via our web portal at [Alaska Redistricting Board - Map Comment \(akredistrict.org\)](https://www.akredistrict.org) or send email to: testimony@akredistrict.org.

In-person testimony: The Board will include an opportunity for “town hall” style in-person testimony at each meeting. The timing will be determined at the meeting based on attendee preference. In-person testimony will be recorded, transcribed, and sent to board members as soon as the transcriptions are complete.

Masks: Masking is required at all community public hearings. Board members and staff are traveling to many locations in the upcoming days and will require that attendees take this precaution to protect the Board and members of the communities.

Call-in testimony: In order to provide an opportunity for all board members to be present to hear call-in testimony, the Board is planning to have two statewide call-in dates – these have been scheduled for October 20 and October 30. To reduce waiting, there will be dedicated times for each community, which will be sent out as soon as they are finalized. However, if you can’t make your designated time, you will be able to call in at any point of the day – callers from that community will be prioritized for that time slot but the plan is to allow all callers to have an opportunity to address the board.

To learn more about the Alaska Redistricting Board, as well as its public meeting schedule, please visit www.akredistrict.org.

AFN to Host-High Level Forum — Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Leadership in Uncertain Times — on October 19

Please join us for our next forum, “Challenges at the Northernmost Border: Leadership In Uncertain Times,” on October 19, 2021. This next gathering in AFN’s roundtable series aims to take stock of the COVID-19 pandemic, the rapid and continuing situational change, and the critical decisions before us.

The forum will include an assessment of the impact of COVID-19 and future scenarios, updates on pandemic projections, economic growth, variants, potential future mutations, and a discussion of how we ultimately will determine that the pandemic is over. Further focus on what comes next will be a major theme of the forum, as will how and why leadership matters. Can we flatten the curve by working together?

Please click [HERE](#) to download the forum abstract.

When: October 19, 2021 (Virtual)

Time: 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (AKST)

Honorary Hosts:

U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski

U.S. Senator Dan Sullivan

U.S. Congressman Don Young

Governor Mike Dunleavy

Special Guest Speakers:

Lieutenant General David Krumm, Commander, Alaskan NORAD Region, Alaskan Command, and Eleventh AF

Rodger Baker, Senior Vice President, Strategic Analysis, Stratfor

Dr. Jay Butler, Deputy Director, Deputy Director for Infectious Diseases, Center for Disease Control (CDC)

Vivian Korthius, President, Association of Village Council Presidents (AVCP)

Col. Damon Delarosa, US Army Corps of Engineers

Hugh Short, PT Capital

[Click here for more information and to register online.](#)

White House National Security Tribal Consultation:

Please note that the White House and the National Security Council will host a tribal consultation on tribal and Arctic strategy on **October 19 from 9:00 a.m. to 11 a.m. (AKST), immediately prior to AFN's forum.** More information on how to sign up for the White House consultation will be emailed to AFN members and tribal leaders. The White House will hold a similar consultation for Alaska Native corporations on October 21, 2021.

AFN Urges Senators Murkowski and Sullivan to Support the Truth and Healing Commission on Boarding Schools Policy Act

The "Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act" is aimed at starting the healing process from the atrocious impacts of Indian Boarding schools. From the 1860s until the 1970s, the U.S. government operated Indian boarding schools intended to expedite the assimilation of Native children.

Alaska Native people are resilient and strong, but the painful and traumatic history of ethnic cleansing and forced assimilation by the federal government still lives on in our communities and families. This act will assist in the development of recommendations for Congress to aid in the healing of the historical and intergenerational trauma passed down to families and communities and provide a

forum for victims to speak about personal experiences tied to the human rights violations of the boarding schools. Additionally, the Commission may advocate for funding for essential services that facilitate healing.

And click [HERE](#) for a copy of the draft legislation that includes an AFN seat on the Advisory Commission. At the recommendation of AFN staff, please feel free to send your own organization's letter of support. Congressman Young has expressed his interest in joining as a co-sponsor on the House side. Amendments are still being considered for this bill.

COVID-19 UPDATE

Alaska's Surge in COVID-19 Cases Continues

The highly contagious delta variant is spreading across Alaska, driving one of the nation's sharpest upticks in infections and posing risks for remote villages where the closest hospital is hours away. Click [HERE](#) for the *Anchorage Daily News* article about the impact on rural Alaska.



Alaska Dept. of Health and Social Services COVID Data Hub

Getting vaccinated remains the best defense against serious illness and death, health authorities say. The July report found unvaccinated Alaskans were 7 1/2 times as likely to be hospitalized as vaccinated people.

As of Monday, 62.9% of eligible Alaskans had received at least one dose of vaccine and 58.9% were considered fully vaccinated. Alaska ranked 30th in the country for vaccination rates, a slight uptick since last week.

For up-to-date information, visit the [State of Alaska's COVID-19 page](#). You can download the Alaska Department of Health and Human Services "Reasons to Get Vaccinated Flyer" by clicking [here](#).



Misinformation about vaccinations and how well they work and the downplaying of the seriousness of COVID-19 continues to be a big factor in why so many Alaskans remain unvaccinated. There is a lot of misinformation out there, particularly on social media. Click [here](#) for CDC's helpful page for [mythbusting](#). For facts, guidance, and data at the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services' main COVID page, click [here](#).

YOU CAN TAKE ACTION – Choosing to get vaccinated is the single most important action you can take to protect yourself and your community and to reopen our economy. Check with your local health care provider to get the facts about vaccines, wearing masks, and protecting your families. If you haven't been vaccinated yet, [find a vaccine](#).

Booster doses

Many Alaskans who are at the highest risk for COVID-19 are now eligible to receive a Pfizer booster dose at least six months after the second dose of their Pfizer vaccine series. The CDC recommends:

- people 65 years and older and residents in long-term care settings **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series;

- people aged 50 to 64 with [certain underlying medical conditions](#) **should** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series;
- people 18 to 49 who are at high risk for severe COVID-19 due to [certain underlying medical conditions](#) **may** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks; and
- people aged 18-64 years who are at increased risk for COVID-19 exposure and transmission because of [occupational or institutional setting](#) **may** receive a booster shot of Pfizer-BioNTech's COVID-19 vaccine at least 6 months after their Pfizer-BioNTech primary series, based on their individual benefits and risks.

There is not enough information available to make additional recommendations for other populations or people who got the Moderna or Johnson & Johnson vaccines.

For more information about vaccines, visit covidvax.alaska.gov.

CDC's new guidelines on safer activities for you and your family:

- [If you are fully vaccinated](#), you can participate in many of the activities that you did before the pandemic.
- To maximize protection from the Delta variant and prevent possibly spreading it to others, wear a mask indoors in public if you are in an area [of substantial or high transmission](#).
- Wearing a mask is most important if you have a weakened immune system or if, because of your age or an underlying medical condition, you are at [increased risk for severe disease](#), or if someone in your household has a weakened immune system, is at increased risk for severe disease, or is unvaccinated. If this applies to you or your household, you might choose to wear a mask regardless of the level of transmission in your area.
- You should continue to wear a mask where required by laws, rules, regulations, or local guidance.

- Learn more about the CDC's recommendations for fully vaccinated people at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html.

Misinformation about vaccinations and how well they work and the downplaying of the seriousness of COVID-19 continues to be a big factor in why so many Alaskans remain unvaccinated. There is a lot of misinformation out there, particularly on social media. Click [here](#) for CDC's helpful page for [myth-busting](#) and [here](#) for the Public Health Communication Collaborative's page on misinformation.

For facts, guidance, and data at the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services' main COVID page, click [here](#).

AFN Meeting Schedule

AFN Quarterly Board Meeting — Friday, October 15 — The AFN Board will decide whether to hold an in-person or virtual 2021 Convention, which was postponed to December 13-15

AFN Forum, Northernmost Border: Leadership in Uncertain Times — Tuesday, October 19

AFN Navigator Schedule — Click [HERE](#) for a schedule of AFN Navigator Program training, events, and workshops