

Alaska Federation of Natives

Statewide Briefing



Week of October 18-22, 2021

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Native Community Mourns Loss Of Bristol Bay Leader Ralph Andersen



AFN extends our deepest condolences to the family of Bristol Bay leader Ralph Andersen, President and CEO of the Bristol Bay Native Association,

and longtime AFN board member and former Co-Chair, who died last Wednesday, October 20, at age 67.

In addition to his BBNA leadership, Ralph served as chair of the Bristol Bay Partnership and the Western Alaska Salmon Coalition. He was a shareholder of the Native village corporation of Clark's Point, Saguyak, Inc., as well as the Bristol Bay Native Corporation.

To read the *Anchorage Daily News* story, click [HERE](#).

Our thoughts and prayers remain with his wife, Flossie Andersen, and the people of Bristol Bay.

AFN Promotes Alaska Native Voting Rights at Key U.S. Senate Hearing

AFN Executive Vice President and General Counsel Nicole Borromeo testified Wednesday before the U.S. Senate Committee on the Judiciary's Subcommittee on The Constitution in a hearing on Native voting rights. The hearing, "Restoring the Voting Rights Act: Protecting the Native American and Alaska Native Vote," provided nationally prominent Native leaders the opportunity to speak in support of safeguarding Native voting rights through the [John R. Lewis Voting Rights Advancement Act of 2021, or S.4](#), (VRAA).

Having worked to overcome the decades-long disenfranchisement of Alaska Native voters, and counting as members nearly 500 federally recognized tribes and Alaska Native corporations, AFN is well-positioned to help the Committee understand the continuing need to protect Alaska Native voting rights, including access to the electoral process. AFN stated that provisions in the VRAA, and Title III of that bill, [The Frank Harrison, Elizabeth Peratrovich, and Miguel Trujillo Native American Voting Rights Act of 2021 \(NAVRA\)](#), are essential to address the obstacles that continue to impede the political participation of Alaska Natives.

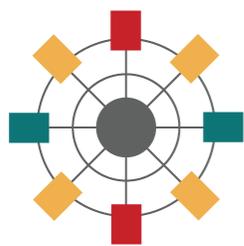
"NAVRA is an essential part of S.4 because it targets the unique barriers Alaska Native voters experience when we attempt to



register to vote, cast a ballot, and have that ballot counted,” Borrromeo testified. “Protecting the right to vote is not a partisan issue; it is a fundamental civil rights issue for Alaska Natives.”

To read AFN’s written testimony, click [HERE](#).

To watch Borrromeo’s oral remarks, click [HERE](#).



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Natives stop COVID
and secure resources.*

Alaska Redistricting Board’s Public Hearings Schedule Nears Completion

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. Organizations and individuals 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.

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

Public hearings will be held in the following communities this week:

[Public Hearing in Wasilla](#)

The Board will be hosting an Open House on Tuesday, October 26 from 6pm - 8pm at the Menard Center, [1001 S. Clapp St in Wasilla](#). [Public Notice](#)

[Public Hearing in Anchorage](#)

The Board will be hosting an Open House on Wednesday, October 27 from 5pm - 7pm at the Lakefront Hotel, [4800 Spenard Road, Anchorage](#). [Public Notice](#)

[Public Hearing in Utqiagvik](#)

The Board will be hosting an Open House on Thursday, October 28 from 4:30 - 6:30pm at the North Slope Borough Building Assembly Chambers, [1274 Agvik Street, Barrow](#). [Public Notice](#)

[Public Hearing: Statewide Dial-in](#)

The Board will be hosting a statewide dial-in public hearing on Saturday, October 30 from 10am - 4pm. Dial toll-free statewide: 844-586-9085, from Juneau: 586-9085, from Anchorage: 563-9085 [Public Notice](#)

[Public Hearing in Cordova](#)

The Board will be hosting an Open House on Monday, November 1 from 4pm - 6pm at the Cordova Center, [601 1st Street, Cordova](#).

National Security Council to Host Consultations with Alaska Natives on U.S. Arctic Strategy

The National Security Council (NSC), in coordination with the U.S. Department of the Interior (Interior), is hosting Tribal and Alaska Native Corporation consultations regarding the development of a new U.S. government strategy for the Arctic. The strategy will update the [2013 National Strategy for the Arctic Region](#) and will

similarly address security and international governance, economic, and environmental issues in both the domestic and foreign policy arenas.

NSC and Interior are hosting two sessions, one for tribal organizations, and another for Alaska Native corporations. Below are the dates and times for both sessions.

Tribal Consultation

- Date: Tuesday, October 26, 2021 (Virtual)
- Time: 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m., Alaska time (3:00 – 5:00 p.m. EST)
- Where: Virtual – Please register in advance
at: https://pitc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_nd0HRT2ET12G8RufLdbzjQ

Click [HERE](#) for the Dear Tribal Leader Letter.

Alaska Native Corporation Consultation

- Date: Friday, October 29, 2021 (Virtual)
- Time: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. Alaska time (2:00 – 4:00 p.m. EST)
- Where: Virtual – Please register in advance
at: https://pitc.zoomgov.com/webinar/register/WN_QWcFjuruR52JZora3UhlWA

Click [HERE](#) for the Dear ANC Leader Letter

Covid Relief Funding for Alaska Natives Extended in Senate Bill

Senate Passes Bill to Allow Unspent COVID Relief Dollars for Infrastructure, Disaster Relief

Last week on October 19 the U.S. Senate passed S.3011, the *State, Local, Tribal,*

and Territorial Fiscal Recovery, Infrastructure, and Disaster Relief Flexibility Act, legislation that includes a provision granting an extension until December 31, 2022 for tribes—including Alaska Native Corporations (ANCs)—to spend Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) resources from the March 2020 *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act*. AFN commends the work of Senators Murkowski and Sullivan in authoring the extension provision.

The eligibility of ANCs for this COVID-19 relief has undergone months of litigation, culminating in a June decision by the U.S. Supreme Court upholding their access to the tribal set-aside within Title V of the *CARES Act*. ANCs, having only recently received disbursements from the Treasury Department, have been requesting more time to spend the roughly \$443.8 million allocated to them, which was set to expire at the end of 2021.

AFN will continue to closely monitor this legislation.

White House Announces Tribal Consultations on America the Beautiful Initiative

The White House Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) is holding two tribal consultations to garner input on the America the Beautiful initiative, particularly the focus area of supporting tribally led conservation and restoration priorities.

The Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, and Commerce, and the Chair of the CEQ issued the [Conserving and Restoring America the Beautiful Report](#) on May 6, 2021. The report provides a framework for how the U.S. can achieve national conservation goals, including conserving at least 30 percent of U.S. lands and waters by 2030. The report notes difficulty for Native communities to access federal funding and assistance to support conservation efforts and calls for improved engagement with American Indians, Alaska Natives, and Native Hawaiians on the care and management of public lands and waters, particularly regarding sacred and ceremonial sites, and trust and treaty rights.

Click [HERE](#) to read the 'Dear Tribal Leader Letter' for more information and specific questions CEQ is putting forward to garner input from Native communities. Below are the times and instructions for the two consultation sessions.

Tribal Consultation Option 1:
October 26, 2021
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m (EST)
Click [HERE](#) to register in advance

Tribal Consultation Option 2:
October 28, 2021
3:00 - 5:30 p.m. (EST)
Click [HERE](#) to register in advance

In addition to or, instead of joining these sessions, you may provide your written input to conservation@ceq.eop.gov by November 23rd, 2021. If you have any questions regarding this effort, please feel free to contact Stephenne Harding, Senior Director of Lands, at Stephenne.S.Harding@ceq.eop.gov, or at (202) 881-9419.

2021 White House Tribal Nations Summit Scheduled for November 15 and 16

The White House has announced that the 2021 White House Tribal Nations Summit will officially take place November 15-16, 2021. Please note that the date has changed. This year the Summit will take place virtually.

The White House announcement stated that President Biden and Senior Administration Officials look forward to hosting a robust and meaningful dialogue with Tribal leaders on key issues, policy initiatives, and goals for Indian Country. To better reflect the federal government's Nation-to-Nation relationship with Tribal

Nations, we have changed the name from a conference to a summit. The Biden-Harris Administration is deeply committed to honoring our trust and treaty responsibilities with federally recognized Tribes and the Summit provides an opportunity for Tribal leaders to engage directly with officials from the highest levels of the Administration.

Additional details about the Summit are forthcoming. Please be sure to register for the 2021 Tribal Nations Summit by Friday, November 5, 2021. If you have already submitted your registration for the Summit, you do not need to re-register.

[Click here to register for the 2021 Tribal Nations Summit](#)

The Summit will feature panel discussions and listening sessions with high level Administration officials on Tribal priorities. Your input is highly valued and we ask that you fill out this short questionnaire by Friday, November 5th.

[Click here to fill out the questionnaire](#)

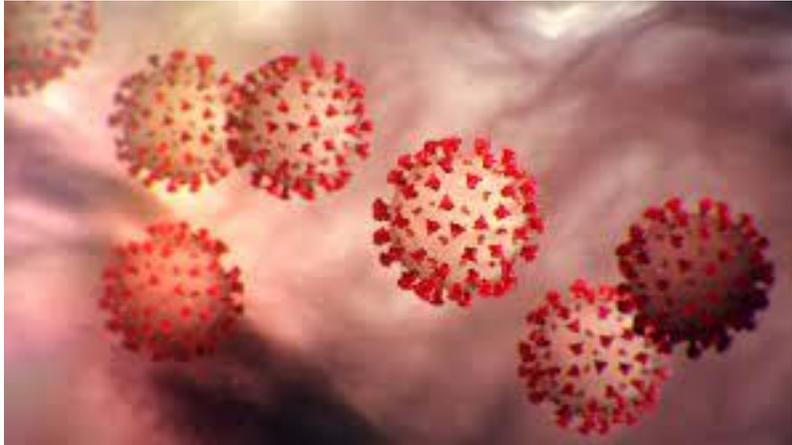
If you have any questions, please reach out to TNS@who.eop.gov.

AFN Board Supports Ballot Initiative Calling on State of Alaska to Formally Recognize Alaska's 229 Tribes

At its October 15 board meeting, AFN voted unanimously to support Alaskans for Better Government, a ballot initiative campaign that calls on the State of Alaska to formally acknowledge Alaska Native Tribes. Formal recognition would create a long-overdue, permanent government-to-government relationship between the State and Alaska Native Tribes.

The [initiative's website](#) says, "Together, in a mutually agreed upon and solid relationship, the State and the Tribes could leverage their status, infrastructure, and funds and have the potential to generate millions of dollars to invest in education, healthcare, criminal justice, and more." Alaskans can get involved in

multiple ways. Click on the [google form](#) to sign up to help this important campaign.



COVID-19 UPDATE

Pfizer Vaccine Booster Shots Now Available For High-Risk People

Flu Season Has Begun! Flu Shots Also Available

COVID-19 Vaccine booster shots are available for the following Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine recipients who completed their initial series at least 6 months ago and are:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#)
- Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#)
- Age 18+ who work in [high-risk settings](#)
- Age 18+ who live in [high-risk settings](#)

Click [HERE](#) for the Center for Disease Control (CDC) COVID-19 vaccination booster information page, and [HERE](#) for the helpful CDC booster infographic.

Keep yourself and those around you safe!

Flu season is upon us and ANTHC, state, and federal health officials are urging Alaskans to vaccinate against the flu. Many tribal health organizations are running flu clinics across Alaska. Please check with your local facility for times and dates near you. It is important for all people to get vaccinated for the flu to protect ourselves, as well as our family, coworkers and community. In addition, influenza poses a greater risk to certain people like pregnant women, children and Elders – they are all at high risk for flu-related complications. For more information about flu vaccines from ANTHC, click [HERE](#). For CDC info, click [HERE](#).

A common myth about the flu vaccine is that it can cause you to get the flu. Fact: You cannot get the flu from a flu vaccine. The vaccine does not contain live flu viruses or in many cases, the flu virus at all. Vaccine safety is closely monitored annually by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). To learn more about influenza and vaccination myths and facts, click [HERE](#).

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](#).



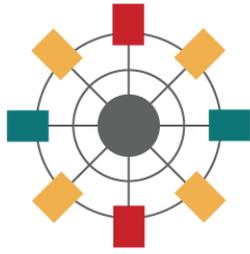
Getting vaccinated remains the best defense against serious illness and death, health authorities say. The July report found unvaccinated Alaskans were 7 1/2 times as likely to be hospitalized as vaccinated people.

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](#).

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.
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AFN Navigator Program

*Helping Alaska
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AFN Navigator Program Trainings, Events & Workshops

Click [HERE](#) for a list of upcoming AFN Navigator events, workshops, and training.

AFN Meeting Schedule

AFN Annual Convention — Virtual, December 13 & 14, 2021