



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES, INC.
2013 AFN CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 13-33

- TITLE:** A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING THE PROTECTION OF SLED DOG MUSHING IN ALASKA AND TO AFFIRM ALASKA AS A "RIGHT TO MUSH" STATE AND TO PROTECT THE CUSTOMARY AND TRADITIONAL ACTIVITY OF SLED DOG MUSHING FOR THE SPIRITUAL, MENTAL AND PHYSICAL HEALTH OF ALASKANS
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 118 federally-recognized tribes, 133 village corporations, 13 regional corporations, and 11 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and run federal and state programs; and
- WHEREAS:** The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) fully supports all of its members in all aspects of their self-determination, health and well-being, and
- WHEREAS:** The State of Alaska has an extensive system of accountability, approved by The federal government, for schools and school districts; and
- WHEREAS:** The State sport of Alaska is mushing; it is embraced by Native and non-Native persons alike, who continue to live with dogs, travel by dog team and perpetuate the culture and tradition of dog mushing that has been exercised for thousands of years in Alaska by Native Alaskans; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska is historically home to sled dogs and dog mushers. It is an important thread in the fabric of Alaskan life, an important aspect of the spiritual wellbeing and cultural identity; and
- WHEREAS:** Sled Dog mushing is more than a sport, it is a way of life that has roots in ancient times when man first bonded with animals. This relationship helped Native Alaskans to live, hunt, thrive, and populate this state prior to the arrival of mechanized means of transportation; and
- WHEREAS:** Mushing is under attack in Alaska. Sled dog mushers around the state are experiencing harassment through frivolous lawsuits, the hampering of kennel operations, sled dog training runs and obstruction of trails; and

WHEREAS: Mushers all over the state are being bullied, intentionally disturbed and bothered by individuals who have no respect for the art of dog mushing, dog husbandry and the traditional Alaskan way of life; and

WHEREAS: Dog mushers contribute to the image of Alaska as the last frontier state; they contribute to state and local economies by providing popular tourist attractions; they contribute to the Alaskan sports scene by holding sled dog races that attract millions of fans worldwide and provide excitement and purpose locally; they contribute to the pride, spiritual and physical wellbeing and cultural identity of fans and mushers alike, whether be it through racing or recreationally mushing.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Delegates of the 2013 Alaska Federation of Natives support the creation of the Code of the North, which establishes Alaska as a “Right to Mush” state. The Code of the North entails that people who chose to live in Alaska should embrace the fact that sled dog mushing is still alive and practiced. The Code of the North is based on the honor that sled dog mushing brings, and the grit and tenacity learned from mushing miles through open wild country in harsh weather conditions. Mushers –provided that they honorably maintain their kennel and humanely treat the dogs - need the support of Alaskans so that they are able to perpetuate the tradition and culture of sled dog keeping in Alaska for future generations.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this resolution shall be the policy of AFN until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| SUBMITTED BY: | ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS |
| COMMITTEE ACTION: | DO PASS |
| CONVENTION ACTION: | PASS |

