



March 3, 2016

Sent Via Electronic Mail
Senator Stoltze, Co-Chair
Senator Coghill, Co-Chair
Senate State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99811

Re: Doyon Support for SB 159/ HB 275 Indigenous Peoples Day

Dear Senator Stoltze and Senator Coghill:

This letter is a written statement of support for SB 159/HB 275, a bill to establish the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day. Doyon's mission is to enhance our position as a financially strong Native Corporation in order to promote the social and economic well-being of our shareholders, strengthen our Native way of life, and enhance our land and resources.

Doyon, Limited is the state-chartered Alaska Native Corporation established pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act for Interior Alaska. Currently we have over 19,300 shareholders, most of whom live here in Alaska.

Doyon welcomed Governor Walker's proclamation designated October 12, 2015 as Indigenous Peoples Day, and we further would welcome an annual celebration which recognizes not only the history of Alaska Native people and Alaska's history, but also current contributions by Indigenous people to art, culture, policy, knowledge, traditions, and achievement.

Thank you for the work you do in the interest of Alaskans, and if you have any questions concerning this recommendation, please contact our office at (907) 459-2092.

Sincerely,

Aaron M. Schutt
President and CEO
Doyon, Limited

Cc: Senate State Affairs Committee
Representative Bob Lynn, Chair of House State Affairs Committee

Diane E Benson
PO Box 770369 Eagle River, Alaska 99577
DianeBenson2010@gmail.com, work: debenson2@alaska.edu

January 28, 2016

To: House State Affairs Committee

In support of House Bill 275 "Indigenous Peoples Day"

The recognition of Indigenous Peoples Day is meaningful to me – not so much because I am a professor of Alaska Native Studies, or that I am Tlingit Indian – but because it honors our legacy and our existence. Transitions in the state since statehood continued to make for a trying time for Alaska Native peoples. Growing up during this period meant perhaps removal from one's family and placement in other homes or schools, being escorted out of establishments, unwarranted arrests, or many other occurrences that would diminish one's cultural, familial, and even spiritual existence as an indigenous human being. This bill has the potential to bring some sense of peace to a tragic history.

Recognition of a human beings' existence goes a long way. That is what this bill is offering. That recognition that we exist; that we matter. That we contribute to the good of state. That we are here. That our cultures are valuable and worthy. It adds another layer of dignity.

The bill implies there is value in Native people and culture. It is important to say this, because Alaska Native people have been dehumanized, as evidenced through the high numbers of violence against Native women, and the levels of the incarcerated, the deaths, and disenfranchised. Such violence and disregard can only occur, as history has repeatedly demonstrated, when one is dehumanized; reduced to a disposable character. Therefore, for the societal affect alone, this bill is meaningful. It is one spoke in the wheel of change that is so desperately needed. It encourages a way of thinking – the value of each human being.

Please pass this bill.

Gunalchéesh,
Diane E Benson (L'x̣eis')



Municipality of Anchorage

Office of the Mayor

Ethan Berkowitz, Mayor

February 5, 2016

House State Affairs Committee
Attn: Representative Lynn
c/o Representative Drummond
State Capitol, Room 112
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Chair Lynn,

As Mayor of Anchorage, I support Representative Drummond's effort to create an Indigenous Peoples Day as an annual day of honor for Alaska's first peoples. My administration is proud to have designated October 12, 2015, as Indigenous Peoples Day, and we appreciate that Representative Drummond is endeavoring to make that an annual tradition on the state level.

As Alaska's "biggest village," with more than 23,000 Native Alaskans calling Anchorage home, the Municipality of Anchorage recognizes the important role that Alaska Native communities and traditions have in our city's identity.

Representative Drummond's Indigenous Peoples Day legislation will encourage all Alaskans to support this annual celebration and remind all of us about the strength of Alaska's roots, and the values to guide us towards our future.

Sincerely,

Ethan Berkowitz
Mayor



January 25, 2015

House State Affairs Committee
120 4th Street
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: HB 275 Indigenous Peoples Day

Dear Committee Members,

While we recognize that Christopher Columbus was among the first Europeans to land on the shores of the North American Continent, it is time for Alaska to eliminate Columbus Day and recognize the Indigenous Peoples of Alaska. The rich culture and Indigenous knowledge of Alaska Natives have been of great influence in Alaska and it is time to celebrate and recognize those cultures by establishing the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) is a regional Native nonprofit founded in 1980. The institute's mission is to perpetuate and enhance the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures of Southeast Alaska. Its goal is to promote cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding. SHI has worked for over three decades to preserve and enhance the culture and language of Native Peoples. We have promoted the integration of culture and language into schools because of the benefits it provides to Native Students. We also believe that these efforts support cultural diversity that make Alaska a richer state.

Governor Walker started the movement toward establishing Indigenous Peoples Day in 2015, and I believe that we should make this change permanent. The past few years we have seen continued support of Alaska Native Heritage with the signing of HB 216 changing the State Language from English to include 20 Alaska Native Languages as official state languages and more initiatives to support Alaska Native education, language and culture.

The contributions by Alaska Natives to the State of Alaska have been significant and it is time we acknowledge and celebrate those contributions.

We respectfully urge you to adopt HB 275 establishing the second Monday in October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rosita Worl". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Rosita Worl, Ph.D.
President





January 27, 2015

To Whom It May Concern,

Re: Support of HB 275 "Indigenous Peoples Day"

Tanana Chiefs Conference is a non-profit tribal health and social service consortium representing the tribal communities of interior Alaska. Tanana Chiefs was established over 100 years ago when the Native leaders of the time unified to address the needs of the tribes. In 1915, the federal representatives and newspapers were surprised of our chiefs' intelligence and diplomacy¹ as they advocated for the priorities of our people. One-hundred years later, as our cultures have proved resilient and our leaders and tribal members continue to contribute to the State of Alaska, it is important the State pursue a formal day to recognize the achievements of the Indigenous.

We believe this day should be the second-Monday of October in order to provide a learning opportunity for Alaskans and especially the youth to discuss the impacts of historical trauma and successes of Native people. Too often Alaskans fail to be educated on history or governance which prohibits advancement within our state.

Again, we appreciate the consideration of this bill. We believe the bill will create invaluable awareness and educational opportunities.

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

Victor Joseph
President and CEO

SUBREGIONS

Upper Kuskokwin

McGrath
Medfra
Nikola
Taktotna

Lower Yukon

Anvik
Grayling
Holy Cross
Shageluk

Upper Tanana

Dot Lake
Eagle
Healy Lake
Northway
Tanacross
Tetlin
Tok

Yukon Flats

Arctic Village
Beaver
Birch Creek
Canyon Village
Chalkyitsik
Circle
Fort Yukon
Venetie

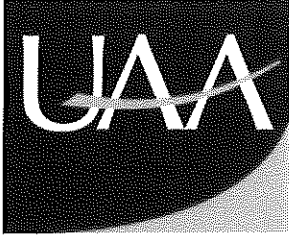
Yukon Koyukuk

Galena
Huslia
Kaltag
Koyukuk
Nulato
Ruby

Yukon Tanana

Alatna
Allakaket
Evansville
Fairbanks
Hughes
Lake Minchumina
Manley Hot
Springs
Minto
Nenana
Rampart
Stevens Village
Tanana

¹ Alaska Citizen (Fairbanks), July 12, 1915.



Alaska Native Studies

UNIVERSITY *of* ALASKA ANCHORAGE

January 27, 2016

Dear Representative Harriet Drummond:

Please regard this as a letter of highest support for House Bill 275, to establish the second Monday of October as Indigenous Peoples Day.

This is a wonderful way to recognize the Indigenous peoples of Alaska and I am so pleased that this House Bill is being introduced. I think the history of our great State reflects the uniqueness of our diversity and this is especially true for our Indigenous Population. Creating an Indigenous Peoples Day will highlight the important history of all Indigenous people, and the economic and social contributions to our state.

Alaska has some wonderful statistics - such as of the 566 Federally Recognized tribes in the US, 229 are in Alaska; Alaska Native K-12 students make up 27% of the overall student population - that means one in four K-12 students in Alaska is Indigenous!

Alaska also can be proud of the historic 1971 Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act, which established 12 regional corporations. Today, these regional corporations are the state's number one employer.

Having an Indigenous Peoples Day will be a way to provide information and education on the important roles that Indigenous and Alaska Native people play in our contemporary society.

I wholeheartedly support this Bill!
Gunalsheesh!/Thank you in Tlingit

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maria Williams', is written over the typed name.

Maria Williams, Director
Alaska Native Studies
University of Alaska Anchorage
907-786-6136

**CELEBRATE INDIGENOUS PEOPLE'S DAY
ON OCTOBER 12
RESOLUTION NO. 2015-02**

WHEREAS, Columbus Day is currently celebrated on October 12 to bring recognition to Columbus' arrival to the Americas in 1492; and

WHEREAS, it is disrespectful to Native governments to celebrate an individual that contributed to the genocide of Native American people and the continued celebration masks the treatment of Indigenous people during the colonial period; and

WHEREAS, as a people, the Indigenous groups and governments have endured disease, and genocide by the colonial governments; and

WHEREAS, the courageous strength by Indigenous peoples to continue as modern day governments with self-determining powers should be celebrated by all.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Tanana Chiefs Conference region shall celebrate Indigenous People's Day on October 12, the day America celebrates Columbus, as a way to oppose the celebration of Columbus's ill treatment towards Native people and to also celebrate the courageous strength by Indigenous peoples to continue as modern day governments with self-determining powers.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors on March 19, 2015 at Fairbanks, Alaska and a quorum was duly



PJ Simon
Secretary/Treasurer



Submitted by: McGrath Tribal Council