



February 18, 2020

Rep. Chuck Kopp
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Rep. Kopp,

We write to express our strong support and appreciation for House Bill 221 – An Act Providing for State Recognition of Federally Recognized Tribes.

Alaska Native people have lived on these lands since time immemorial. Tribal governments have held a special recognition and place in Alaska as sovereign governments providing important services and support, including public safety, economic development, and protectors of our lands and water, all efforts that continue to serve Tribal citizens today.

Alaska is home to 229 federally recognized Tribes. This formal relationship was established with the federal government; however, no formal recognition by the state of Alaska has taken place. We appreciate and recognize the important step that HB 221 takes to correct this wrong and formally recognize Alaska's federally recognized Tribes.

For many years, and even today, trauma has been inflicted on Native people many times over with the lack of respect and lack of recognition of our sovereign status. The fact that the state of Alaska does not recognize Tribes continues to be a point of contention and trauma. Tribes and Native people bring many contributions to our state, including millions of dollars for healthcare through Indian Health Services and education dollars through Head Start. Our Native cultures are filled with a rich history and there is no Alaska without the Indigenous people who have called these lands home for thousands of years. It is time that the state government formally recognize the first people of this land and I hope this Legislature and Governor will agree.

HB 221 is a step that needs to be taken to help begin the process to bring healing and recognition that will open more opportunities to better working relationships between Tribal and state governments. We appreciate your leadership and we stand ready to help in any way possible.

Gunalchéesh/Háw'aa/Quyana/Mahsi'/Baassee'/Maasee'/Dogedinh/Thank you,

Kendra Kloster

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