



THE STATE  
of **ALASKA**

GOVERNOR MICHAEL J. DUNLEAVY

**Department of Natural Resources**

DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

SOUTHEAST REGION

PO Box 111071

Juneau, Alaska 99811

Main: 907.465.4563

April 9, 2019

Representative Geran Tarr  
Representative John Lincoln  
Co-Chairs, House Resources Committee  
State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

To the Co-chairs and Members of the House Resources Committee;

House Bill 122, sponsored by Representative Hannan and co-sponsored by Representatives Edgmon, Kriess-Tomkins, Ortiz, Story, Tuck, Spohnholz, and Zulkosky, would expand the boundaries of the Funtier Bay State Marine Park in Southeast Alaska to encompass the Funtier Bay Unangax Cemetery parcel.

The Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation wishes to go on record as supporting this legislation. We would be pleased to accept management responsibility for this site, which is so important to the history of our state, and to the culture and memory of the Aleut people.

The Southeast Regional Alaska State Parks staff has been working with many organizations and individuals for a way to provide better management and protection of this significant historic cultural resource.

It has been a privilege to coordinate and work with the diverse group of knowledgeable and enthusiastic people, agencies and organizations working hard to further protect this site, and to help inform Alaskans about the importance of the cemetery and the hardships imposed on the Aleut people of St. Paul and St. George islands in Funtier Bay during World War II.

Alaska State Parks is honored at the opportunity to be entrusted to manage this parcel as part of the Funtier Bay State Marine Park, and would be glad to answer any questions from you or your committee on this legislation.

Yours very respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ricky Gease".

Ricky Gease  
Director, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation



## ***Friends of Admiralty Island***

***P.O. Box 20791***

***Juneau, AK 99802***

***Ph/fax (907)586-6738***

***admiralty\_friends@yahoo.com***

**Hose resources Committee  
Alaska Legislature  
4/13/2019**

### **Letter in support of HB 122**

Friends of Admiralty Island has long advocated for the protection of this Unangax cemetery, which this bill helps assure.

This essential protection is the first step in preserving the story of the forced and inhumane relocation to Funter Bay of the Pribilof residents of St. Paul and St. George during WWII.

Including the cemetery in the Funter Bay Marine Park, a key element of the bill provides a path for preserving on site the retelling of this tragic story. With passage of this bill the State Park system has the opportunity, even obligation to develop culturally appropriate educational material that honors the strength and sacrifices of the Unangax people.

Friends of Admiralty has pledged financial help to aid in the documentation and telling of this vital history.

Friends of Admiralty is a 501-c-3 non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the educational, scientific, cultural, and wilderness values of the Island. We were formed in 1997 and have some 350 members.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K.J. Monteith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

For, Daniel Monteith

President, Friends of Admiralty



*With Spirit and Strength*

April 15, 2019

Members of the House Resources Committee  
State Capital  
Juneau, Alaska 99801

**Support of House Bill No. 122: An Act Relating to Protection of Funtner Bay Unangax Cemetery**

Dear Honorable Members of the House Resources Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to speak in support of House Bill No. 122, an "An Act relating to the Funtner Bay marine park unit of the state park system; relating to protection of the social and historical significance of the Unangax cemetery located in Funtner Bay and providing for the amendment of the management plan for the Funtner Bay marine park unit."

The mission of Aleutian Pribilof Islands Association includes strengthening and preserving Unangax cultural heritage. The forced removal of about 850 Unangax/Aleut people from our region by the United States military and the placing of these people in abandoned canneries without basic facilities where about 10% of the people died in what has been appropriately termed wrongful deaths is an important part of Unangax/Aleut history. Thus, we appreciate Representative Sara Hannan proposing the bill, we appreciate the members of the House Resources Committee considering this bill, and we strongly support the passage of House Bill No. 122 to protect the Funtner Bay Unangax cemetery.

If you have any further questions, please contact me at (907) 276-2700 or [dimitrip@apiai.org](mailto:dimitrip@apiai.org).

Regards,

Dimitri Philemonof  
President/CEO



CENTRAL COUNCIL  
*Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska*  
Office of the President • Edward K. Thomas Building  
9097 Glacier Highway • Juneau, Alaska 99801

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May 6, 2019

House Resource Committee  
Alaska House of Representatives  
120 4th Street  
Juneau, AK 99801

**RE: Support for House Bill 122**

Dear Honorable Members of the House Resource Committee:

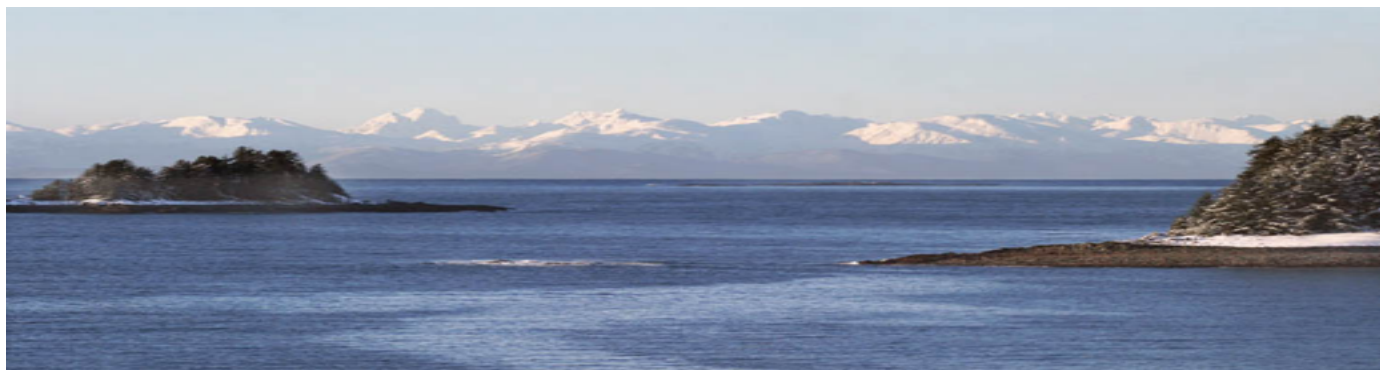
The Central Council of Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida) is a federally recognized tribal government representing over 31,000 citizens. We are a sovereign entity and have a government-to-government relationship with the United States.

Tlingit & Haida writes in support of House Bill (H.B.) 122 for the expansion of the boundaries for the Funter Bay State Park to include the Funter Bay Unangax Cemetery. The objective of this bill is in alignment with Southeast Alaska's traditional tribal values, many of which are held in common with other indigenous people in Alaska.

The forced removal of the Unangax people and wrongful deaths that occurred as a result of their removal is a crucial part of the traumatic history endured by many of Alaska's indigenous peoples. The protection of the Funter Bay Unangax Cemetery is the very least that can be done to honor the Unangax people and others who lost their lives during this dark time in Alaska's history. Tlingit & Haida strongly supports H.B. 122.

Gunalchéesh / Haw'aa,

Richard Chalyee Éesh Peterson  
President



**Juneau Area State Parks Citizen Advisory Board**

**400 Willoughby Ave., Suite 500  
Juneau, AK 99801**

**Photo by A. W. Hanger**

Rep. Geran Tarr  
Rep. John Lincoln  
Co-Chairs, House Resources Committee  
State Capitol  
Juneau AK, 99801

Members of the House Resources Committee,

The Juneau Area State Parks Citizen Advisory Board (CAB) is writing in support of the Funter Bay Unangax Cemetery parcel as part of Funter Bay State Marine Park, as it is sponsored by Representative Hannan and co-sponsors; Speaker Edgmon, Representatives Story, Tuck, Zulkosky, Ortiz, Kriess-Tomkins and Sponholz in HB 122.

The Juneau Area State Parks CAB supports Alaska State Parks taking on the role to protect, manage, and inform about the importance of the cemetery and the events suffered by the St. Paul Island and St. George Island Aleut people in Funter Bay during World War II.

Thank you for this opportunity to protect this significant historical cultural resource for the Aleut community.

Respectfully,

Rory Darling  
Christy Gentemann  
Ric Iannolino  
Deb Rudis  
Amy Ryder  
Forest Wagner  
Mareta Weed





114 W. 4<sup>th</sup> Street, Juneau, AK 99801  
907-586-3572 – Beth.Weigel@juneau.org

April 12, 2019

Dear Members of the House Resources Committee,

As Director of the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, a department within the City and Borough of Juneau, I am writing in support of HB 122, "An Act relating to the Funter Bay marine park unit of the state park system; relating to protection of the social and historical significance of the Unangax cemetery located in Funter Bay and providing for the amendment of the management plan for the Funter Bay marine park unit; and providing for an effective date."

At the beginning of 2019, a group formed to work on several initiatives related to the forced removal and internment of the Aleut people to Funter Bay and other camps during World War II. This evolving work group is made up of people affiliated with a wide range of organizations and interests from the Aleutian Pribolof Islands Association, the Alaska State Parks and the Alaska State Parks Citizen Advisory Board, the Museum of the Aleutians, the Friends of Admiralty Island, the Juneau-Douglas City Museum, the Juneau Public Libraries, the Aleut Community of St. Paul Island Tribal Government, the University of Alaska Southeast, Tlingit Haida Central Council, Sealaska Heritage Institute, and a representative from the offices' of Senator Kiehl, Representative Hannan, and Representative Story. The group is both advisory and actively working on three initiatives which are to:

- establish protections in perpetuity around Aleut gravesites that are located on Tlingit Aaní on Admiralty Island and is currently managed by the State Department of Natural Resources;
- develop and install interpretive panels at the cemetery site and for use locally for educational and outreach purposes through State Parks and;
- mount an exhibit on the Aleut Internment at the Juneau-Douglas City Museum in summer 2020.

While the working group has gained momentum this year to bring these initiatives to bear, this work has been decades in the making. Since the US Government removed the Aleut people "for their safety" and interned them in Funter Bay in 1942, these loyal Americans who experienced the death of their loved ones due primarily to deplorable living conditions, and the loss of their traditional homes and culture have sought reparations and to have their story and voices heard. Now more than 75 years later, you, the members of the House Resources Committee and the Legislature at large, have the opportunity to say this place, these gravesites, this story matters. With the passage of HB 122 the Aleut people and their descendants can seek healing, build a stronger community, and restore dignity and respect for those who are buried at Funter Bay.

As written by Alaska Native Brotherhood Grand President, Roy Peratrovich, at the time of internment, "It is our patriotic duty to offer every aid and comfort to these our fellow countrymen..."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Beth A. Weigel", written over a light blue horizontal line.

Beth A. Weigel, PhD  
Director, Juneau-Douglas City Museum

February 5, 2020

Members of the Senate Resources Committee

**RE: HB 122: FUNTER BAY MARINE PARK: UNANGAN CEMETERY**

Sealaska Heritage Institute strongly supports the protection of the Unangan cemetery as a unit of the State Parks Division, which is a matter of high cultural and historical importance to the Unangan people, as well as to the Tlingit people of Southeast Alaska who provided material assistance to them during their incarceration in the form of food and blankets. The preservation of the graveyard is significant to the relatives and descendants of those people laid to rest there, who are remembered and held sacred by their living descendants. A crucial dimension of this significance stems from the circumstances of their presence there, as incarcerated persons brought there involuntarily under extreme circumstances.

I can personally attest to the social and historical importance of this bill to the Unangan people of St. Paul and St. George from my experience with them in 1981, which I conducted research into their subsistence practices over a 3 week period. As I got to know the islanders, I soon learned about how their families were forcibly removed from their homes and taken to Southeast Alaska. They spoke to me about how they were given 1 hour to pack what they could carry with them, and to leave everything else. They were very concerned about their Russian Orthodox icons that were left behind in their churches, and which were never recovered as far as I know.

I heard about how they were taken to the wooden cannery building in Funter Bay, and how they stayed in one large room and had to hang up blankets which served as walls between the different families that were put there. Cold came through the wooden walls and plank floors of the uninsulated building. They also spoke of the shortage of food, and not knowing if they would ever return to their homes.

I worked for the National Park Service for 14 years running a research program documenting the attachments between communities and groups with social and historical connections to places that extended through generations. I learned how such places remain significant to groups even though they may have been separated by decades from their experience of the place, and how such connections remain significant to subsequent generations as part of a shared history. In the case of Funter Bay, this history is very close to the surface because it is recent, and because the families have close relatives who are buried in the cemetery.

The Tlingit peoples' ties with the Unangan people go back to the days of Russian occupation in the region when their ancestors were brought here to hunt sea otters. New relationships were formed during the WWII when Unangan people were incarcerated at several sites in Southeast Alaska.

Sincerely,



Chuck Smythe, Ph.D.

Director, Culture and History Department





February 12, 2020

Senate Resources Committee  
Room 205, State Capitol  
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senators,

I support HB 122 am, which recognizes the social and historical significance of the Pribilof Islands cemetery located in Funter Bay on Admiralty Island, Alaska.

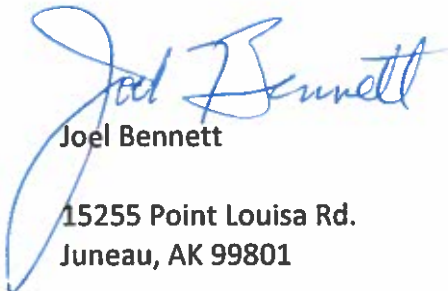
I have been a property owner in Funter Bay since 1989, with approximately three acres of land that abuts the cemetery in question on the northeast side. As such, I am very familiar with the cemetery and the lands surrounding it.

I know of no potential resource conflict on the lands described in HB 122 am. There are no mineral prospects that have ever been claimed or developed on the specific lands described. Patented mining claims have existed on the Mansfield Peninsula of Admiralty Island since the 1930's, but the nearest ones are on the south side of the bay and have experienced little or no production since they were established. The timber resources on not are not considered commercially valuable, consisting mostly of smaller spruce and hemlock stands with large areas of blueberry brush, bog meadows and other low-lying vegetation.

The current US Forest Service plan for Admiralty Island (2016 TLUMP Forest Plan) recognizes the Mansfield Peninsula as semi-remote recreation in its land use designation, further recognizing that the dominant public use of this part of the island is for recreation and not resource development.

I believe It is in the broad public interest to add such an area of historical significance to the state Funter Bay Marine Park unit.

Sincerely,



Joel Bennett

15255 Point Louisa Rd.  
Juneau, AK 99801