



MUSEUM OF THE ALEUTIANS

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February 24, 2021

32nd Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Support of House Bill No. 10: Social and Historical Significance of the Funter Bay Unangax Cemetery

To the Honorable Representatives and Senators of the 32nd Alaska State Legislature:

Thank you for the opportunity to write in support of House Bill 10, 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.”

On behalf of the Museum of the Aleutians’ board and staff, I would like to voice my strong support of this bill. The Museum of the Aleutian’s mission is to collect, preserve, and share the rich cultural history of the Aleutian Islands region.

The forced removal of approximately 850 Unangax from the Pribilof Islands by the United States government had a significant and devastating impact on their heritage. The evacuated Unangax were relocated to Funter Bay, lived in substandard conditions, and not allowed to leave except as forced labor to harvest fur seals for the US Government. The Unangax were housed in abandoned canneries without basic facilities where about 10% of the population died. Disease epidemics including the flu and measles devastated the Unangax living in these deplorable conditions. The Unangax peoples that died at the Funter Bay camp are forever at rest in the Funter Bay Unangan Cemetery, having spent the last days of their lives in the worst conditions imaginable.

The Museum of the Aleutians appreciates Representative Sara Hannan proposing HB10 and the members of the 32nd Alaska Legislature for considering this bill. As a repository that documents, collects, and preserves Unangax cultural heritage, we urge the House and Senate of the 32nd Alaska Legislature to listen to representatives of the Unangax peoples and pass House Bill 10 ensuring the protection of the gravesites of the Unangax laid to rest at Funter Bay.

For any further questions, please contact me at (907) 581-5150 or virginiahatfield@aleutians.org.

Regards, 

Virginia Hatfield
Executive Director

