

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATE ARCTIC AFFAIRS COMMITTEE

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Sen. Donny Olson
Sen. Bill Wielechowski
Sen. Scott Kawasaki

Senate Joint Resolution 26 (v. N)

Sponsor Statement

“Support Native Corp Business Development Program”

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) established Alaska Native corporations in 1971 as for-profit entities designed to promote economic opportunity and long-term stability for Alaska Native shareholders and their communities. Participation in the federal 8(a) Business Development Program has been one of the primary tools enabling ANCs and other tribal entities to fulfill that mission.

Under federal law, Alaska Native corporations and other tribally owned firms are eligible to participate in the 8(a) program in recognition of the federal government’s commitments under ANCSA and the unique structure of the settlement. Through the program, ANCs and tribal entities have created thousands of jobs across Alaska, including in rural and underserved regions where private-sector opportunities can be limited. Revenues generated through 8(a) participation are reinvested into workforce training, scholarships, infrastructure, health services, and other community-based economic development initiatives.

Participation in the 8(a) program spans industries critical to both Alaska and the nation, including construction, engineering, energy, defense, logistics, information technology, and professional services. These activities strengthen Alaska’s economy, expand skilled employment opportunities, and ensure that federal contracting dollars generate measurable in-state benefits.

Ongoing federal review and discussion of the 8(a) program make it important for Alaska to clearly state its position. For more than five decades, ANCSA has functioned as a foundational economic framework for Alaska Native communities. The 8(a) program has been central to supporting job growth, private-sector development, and long-term economic participation across the state.

SJR 26 expresses the Legislature’s support for maintaining the integrity of the 8(a) Business Development Program and preserving the ability of Alaska Native corporations and tribally owned firms to continue participating fully under federal law. It affirms that ANC and tribal participation in the 8(a) program remains a significant contributor to Alaska’s workforce development, economic growth, and overall stability.