



Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska

February 27, 2026

Senate Resources Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Re: Support for SJR 26 – Alaska Native Participation in the SBA 8(a) Program

Dear Chair Giessel and Members of the Senate Resources Committee:

On behalf of the Central Council of the Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (Tlingit & Haida), we write in support of SJR 26, which affirms the importance of Alaska Native corporation participation in the U.S. Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development Program.

Tlingit & Haida is a federally and state recognized Tribal government serving more than 38,000 Tribal citizens across Southeast Alaska and beyond. In alignment with our responsibility to advance economic self-sufficiency and public well-being for our citizens, Tlingit & Haida established Tlingit Haida Tribal Business Corporation (THTBC), a wholly owned Tribal enterprise that participates in the SBA 8(a) program. Through THTBC and its subsidiaries, we provide professional, technical, and infrastructure services in support of federal missions, while creating employment and career pathways for Tribal citizens.

As recognized in SJR 26, Alaska Native corporations were established by Congress through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) to promote long-term economic stability and self-sufficiency for Alaska Native people. The 8(a) program is one of the most effective federal tools available to advance that congressional intent. Participation in the program generates jobs, builds workforce capacity, and produces public-purpose revenues that are reinvested into communities through dividends, training, education, and infrastructure.

We respectfully note that Tribal governments also participate in the SBA 8(a) program through wholly owned Tribal enterprises, under federal authorities that recognize Tribal sovereignty and the government-to-government relationship between Tribal Nations and the United States. For Tribes such as Tlingit & Haida, participation in the 8(a) program similarly supports job creation, workforce development, and the generation of public-purpose revenues that help

meet critical needs in housing, education, infrastructure, and public safety—particularly in rural and remote regions of Southeast Alaska where economic opportunities are limited.

For this reason, we respectfully encourage the Legislature, as it advances SJR 26, to recognize and affirm both Alaska Native corporation and Tribal government participation in the 8(a) Business Development Program as complementary and essential components of Alaska's economy and of federal policy supporting Alaska Native self-determination.

We also want to emphasize that Alaska Native and Tribal participation in the 8(a) program is grounded in federal law and the unique political status of Tribal Nations, not a race-based preference. It reflects longstanding federal policy supporting Tribal self-determination, economic development, and fulfillment of the federal trust responsibility.

Tlingit & Haida supports strong oversight and accountability measures that protect the integrity of the 8(a) program. At the same time, we share the Legislature's concern that proposals to restrict or weaken Alaska Native and Tribal participation would undermine jobs, rural economies, and the ability of Native entities to meet the needs of their citizens and shareholders.

For these reasons, we respectfully urge the Alaska State Legislature to pass SJR 26, and to affirm the continued ability of both Alaska Native corporations and Tribal governments to participate fully in the 8(a) Business Development Program. Gunalchéesh. Háw'aa.

Sincerely,



President Richard J. Peterson
President