

March 30, 2026

Senator Löki Tobin
State Capitol Room 115
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Tobin,

I am writing to you today to express my support for continued funding and support of the Alaska Native Language Center and the Alaska Native Language Archive at UAF.

[NILI](#) was founded in 1997 by a group of elders, apprentices, and administrators from language and education programs from tribes across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. We create and consult with communities on teacher training, language pedagogy, materials and curriculum development, assessment, language documentation, policy, applied linguistics, and educational technology. We were founded, in part, to help address the major gap that exists in terms of support and education for Indigenous language teaching in the PNW as well as in the nation. In 2023, we were awarded the [Northwest Native American Language Resource Center](#) (NW-NALRC) grant, which brings Alaska formerly into our service area.

In the last few weeks, we have heard that the ANLC and ANLA have been facing significant financial and logistical support deficits. Here at NILI and the NW-NALRC, we find this most concerning, as the ANLC and ANLA serve as a fundamental pillar of Alaskan Native language resource access and support. Anything less than a fully-funded and staffed ANLC and ANLA presents a dire risk to the continued survival of AN languages. Further, the ANLC and ANLA must retain full and independent operational control, as their mission and operation differ from that of UAF and the College of Indigenous Studies.

I strongly urge you to fully fund and support the ANLC and ANLA. Their mission is unique and represents the obligation and responsibility that UAF and the State of Alaska have to Alaskan Natives.

Sincerely,



Robert Elliott
Director, Northwest Indigenous Language Institute
Director, Yamada Language Center
University of Oregon
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April 8, 2026

Mike Sfraga, Interim Chancellor
University of Alaska Board of Regents

Dear Chancellor Sfraga and Board of Regents:

I am President of the Linguistic Society of America, a national organization representing those working in the field of linguistics within academia, industry, government, and nonprofit sectors. I am also a professor teaching in the Department of Linguistics at the University of Washington. As someone who has spent my entire career in higher education, I understand that these are challenging times, and university leaders are increasingly called upon to make difficult decisions and choices. I ask that you and the other UAF leaders please consider the following points before finalizing plans that will impact the Alaskan Native Language Center (ANLC). It has come to our attention that there are members of the UAF community who believe that the university is taking actions that will negatively impact staffing, instruction and access in ways that are critical to its mission and function. These include: cutting the ANLC's limited staff, eliminating the publishing arm of the ANLC, and ending access to its Archives.

The LSA is deeply committed to the vitality of Alaska's Indigenous languages and to the health of UAF's Alaskan Native Language Center. The ANLC is a unique institution representing the State of Alaska's core commitments to the Indigenous communities on whose lands it was established. The ANLC was established as part of the legal structure governing the University of Alaska (AS Sec. 14.40.117) as part of an effort to redress the historical suppression of Alaska Native Languages by the federal and state governments. The text of the law reads:

The University of Alaska shall establish an Alaska Native Language Center, the purposes of which are to

- (1) study languages native to Alaska;*
- (2) develop literacy materials;*
- (3) assist in the translation of important documents;*
- (4) provide for the development and dissemination of Alaska Native literature; and*
- (5) train Alaska Native language speakers to work as teachers and aides in bilingual classrooms.*

The ANLC has been instrumental in conducting research to produce curricula for bilingual education in rural Alaskan schools, which for decades has been a lifeline for Alaska Native languages. It has done so by bringing together scholars, students, and community members,

including many speakers of Alaska Native languages, in a close collaboration in a way that has become the model globally. It has inspired centers such as the Yukon Native Language Centre, the California Language Archive, and the Archive of the Indigenous Languages of Latin America. Its research, teaching, archives, and publications remain critical to language revitalization programs in the state.

Part of the Alaska Native Language Center's mission is the maintenance of its Alaska Native Language Archive (ANLA), a collection of recordings, manuscripts, fieldnotes, and other materials that constitutes by far the largest record of Alaska Native languages in the world. It provides high-quality resources to Native communities as well as support for academic research at the highest level. Its resources have enabled communities across Alaska to develop their own grassroots language revitalization efforts. They have also attracted world-class scholars to Alaska. The ANLC is central to the University of Alaska Fairbanks' fulfillment of its larger mission, including emphasizing the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. Therefore, preservation and staffing of the ANLA is fundamental to the mission of the ANLC as well as the University of Alaska itself.

The Alaska Native Language Center's publications program is recognized as a leader in publishing on indigenous languages with a catalogue that ranges from dictionaries and reference grammars to early readers and language exercises, to great works of written and oral literature. Production of high-quality publications and making them accessible to communities and to the public is core to the mission of the ANLC.

In short, maintenance of the ANLC's archives, continued publication of critical language resources, and expansion of course offerings and indigenous language degree programs are critical to the core missions of the center. Funding the ANLC will help to ensure that the University of Alaska Fairbanks fulfills its commitment to serve Alaska's Native people and their intellectual heritage.

The LSA is strongly in support of fully funding the activities, staffing, courses and Archives of the Alaska Native Language Center.

Sincerely,

Alicia Beckford Wassink

LSA President
Professor of Linguistics
University of Washington, Seattle

Cc:
Senator Loki Tobin and staff
Christine Resler, Chair of Audit and Finance Committee

March 31, 2026

The Honorable Loki Tobin, Chair
The Honorable Gary Stevens, Vice Chair
The Honorable Jesse Bjorkman
The Honorable Jesse Kiehl
The Honorable Robert Yundt
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Tobin, Senator Stevens, Senator Bjorkman, Senator Kiehl, and Senator Yundt:

On behalf of, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC), I am writing to express our deepest appreciation for the enduring partnership we have shared with the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) and to share our immense satisfaction with the work we have accomplished together.

For decades, our collaborative efforts alongside ANLC have played a vital role in the documentation, preservation, teaching, and advancement of Alaska Native languages. Together, we have ensured that this work transcends academic boundaries, deeply impacting the cultural identity, knowledge systems, and well-being of the tribes and communities we serve. We are incredibly proud of the intergenerational connections and cultural strength this partnership has fostered.

We are particularly pleased with the tangible results of our shared mission. TCC has a long-standing and multifaceted partnership with the University of Alaska Fairbanks that spans language preservation, education, workforce development, food security, and community capacity building. Our collaboration with the ANLC has included coordinated workshops for Alaska Native language teachers focused on Indigenous language teaching methods, as well as direct financial support through our ANE Language Grant to advance digitization of language materials and strengthen long-term access to language resources.

We deeply value the relationship we have built with ANLC and the University of Alaska Fairbanks.

Thank you for your continued leadership, your belief in collaborative community efforts, and your dedication to the vital work being done at the ANLC.

Sincerely,



Sharon Hildebrand
Chief/Chairman

From: Nick Thieberger <thien@unimelb.edu.au>
Sent: Monday, March 30, 2026 12:27 PM
To: Sen. Löki Tobin <Sen.Loki.Tobin@akleg.gov>
Subject: Importance of the ANLC

Dear Senator Tobin,

I am writing as President of the Digital Endangered Languages and Musics Archives Network (DELAMAN). We are an international network of language archives that work with records of indigenous languages. These languages are in desperate need of support in many ways, but a critical part of that support comes from dedicated curation of records in these languages. This is what the Alaska Native Language Center has provided.

The ANLC is an early and trailblazing initiative that has been a guiding light to archives that started more recently. It is vitally important for the support of Alaska's languages that this center continue to make legacy materials available in a timely way.

The ANLC holds unique and vitally important material and is trusted by the communities it has developed relationships with over many years.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed funding cuts to the ANLC.

With regards,

Nick Thieberger

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President [Digital Endangered Languages and Musics Archives Network \(DELAMAN\)](#)

Director, [Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures \(PARADISEC\)](#)

Deputy Director [Research Unit for Indigenous Language](#)

CI in the [ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language](#)

Lead CI in [Nyingarn, a platform for primary sources in Australian languages](#)

CI in the [Language Data Commons of Australia](#)