

March 24th 2025



Subject: Rural Alaska Energy Sovereignty Task Force, the Right Solution for Alaskans

To: the Honorable Members of the Alaska State Legislature,

I am writing on behalf of the Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy to express strong support for the creation of a Rural Alaska Energy Sovereignty Task Force, as outlined [in Resolution 24-12 from the Alaska Federation of Natives 2024](#) Annual Convention.

The proposed task force, comprised primarily of Tribal leaders and rural residents, will prove an effective mechanism for developing a comprehensive strategy that addresses the unique energy challenges faced by rural Alaska communities. Integrating energy independence, food security, and climate resilience, while upholding Tribal sovereignty and self-determination principles are crucial for the well-being and sustainability of these communities. Rural households spend 27% of their annual income on home energy, compared with less than 7% in urban Alaska.<sup>1</sup>

Recent energy crises, such as those experienced by the Villages of Aniak and Akiak, highlight the urgent need for locally-driven solutions. As Resolution 24-12 details, the Village of Aniak faced a severe energy crisis when power bills quadrupled, and Akiak endured a 52-day power outage. These crises demonstrate the vulnerability of rural communities to energy disruptions and the significant financial strain they cause. A task force led by those most affected will ensure that policies and strategies are tailored to the specific logistical, cultural, and economic conditions of rural Alaska.

The resolution also points out the lack of adequate representation from rural and Alaska Native communities on existing decision-making boards and commissions. The creation of the Rural Alaska Energy Sovereignty Task Force will help rectify this imbalance and ensure that rural energy challenges and sovereignty concerns are adequately reflected in decision-making processes.

I urge you to prioritize the creation of this task force and support its efforts to develop a comprehensive statewide rural energy strategy. This initiative is vital for the future of rural Alaska and its residents.

Sincerely,

**Chéri Smith**  
*Mi'kmaq Descendant*

**President & CEO**

**The Alliance for Tribal Clean Energy**

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<sup>1</sup> <https://avec.org/2020/04/12/the-outlook-for-energy-costs-in-rural-alaska-in-2019/>