

March 2, 2018

The Honorable Governor Bill Walker
State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Governor Walker:

I am Karla Booth and I am a constituent of District 19. I am interested in bill HRC 19 Alaska Native Language Emergency because I am Tsimshian and my family comes from the community of Metlakatla, Alaska and no one in my family can fluently speak our indigenous language called Sm'algayax. In our community as a whole, only about five Elders can fluently speak our language and two adults are second language learners that are almost fluent speakers.

I am asking that you support efforts to place greater importance in the preservation and learning of Alaska Native languages. Alaska Native people cannot save our languages on our own. This needs and deserve the attention of the state of Alaska and all its citizens to take an active role in preserving these treasures that connect us to our ancestors and a people that truly exemplify the spirit of Alaska. By placing an emergency status on the preservation of our languages this could provide the motivation that is needed to enact supportive actions that will strengthen our dying languages. Those actions could include:

- Public recognition and use of indigenous place names
- Use of indigenous greetings and salutations
- Use of indigenous forms of giving thanks
- Indigenous language learning by all K-12 students
- Inclusion of indigenous introductions by all Alaska citizens

Nt'oyaxsn, thank you for your time, energy in serving Alaskans, and your support in preserving what makes Alaska so unique and important to the world. Our languages are a connection to the past that should not be allowed to break.

Sincerely,

Karla Booth
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