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Dear Alaska State Senators,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 130 on behalf of the Alaska Association for Bilingual Education Alaska Native Language and Culture Retention Special Interest Group. The Alaska Native Language and Culture Retention Special Interest Group (ANLCR SIG) is comprised of a cross section of volunteer Native language educators, advocates, and activists working to protect, promote, and revitalize Native languages. As the only statewide Native language advocacy body, the ANLCR SIG carries out this work through conferencing and workshops, networking best practices, and advocating for institutional and governmental support for Native language revitalization initiatives. As a volunteer body our resources and ability to be effective are strained, however, which is why in 2010 the ANLCR SIG sought the creation of a statewide Alaska Native Languages Commission through Alaska Federation of Natives Resolution 10-34. It is for this reason that the ANLCR SIG enthusiastically supports SB 130.

SB 130 will help provide the political advocacy, human and financial resources Alaska Native language advocates, activists, and educators need to craft policies and projects that will contribute to the protection, promotion, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages. Such support is urgently needed at a time when all 19 indigenous languages still spoken in Alaska are endangered or critically endangered. The passing in 2008 of Marie Smith Jones, the last fluent speaker of Eyak, underscores the vulnerability of Alaska Native languages and the urgency with which we must undertake this vital work.

Native languages and the rich cultures they make possible constitute an invaluable contribution to the diversity and richness of our State, and are together an essential component of Alaska's identity. Indeed, there is nothing more Alaskan than Alaska Native languages, and future generations of Alaskans deserve the opportunity to experience and speak them.

Sincerely,

Timothy Aqukkasuk Argetsinger
Chair, AK Native Language and Culture Retention SIG



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January 20, 2012

Senate State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

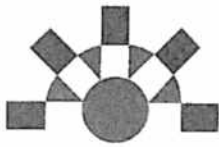
Honorable Alaska State Legislators:

On behalf of the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and the many cultural and language bearers we serve and represent, I ardently express my support for Senate Bill 130 and House Bill 254 in the second session of the Twenty-Seventh Legislature, both entitled "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages."

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) is a 501(c) 3, non-profit organization whose mission is to serve as a gathering place for sharing, perpetuating and preserving Alaska's unique indigenous cultures, languages, traditions and values through celebration and education. Our 15-member Board of Directors is currently governed by members of the 13 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) Regions including Cook Inlet Region Inc., Chugach Alaska Corporation, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, NANA Regional Corporation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Koniag, Inc., Sealaska Corporation, and Ahtna, Inc.

As Alaska Native people, our indigenous languages fulfill a vital role in perpetuating cultural traditions and values. It is our sincere belief that it is critical to take proactive measures now to strengthen our languages while language speakers in each of the Alaska Native culture groups still exist, and the interest and aspiration to revitalize our languages for future generations is strong. At our core, we recognize that indigenous language learning promotes increased self-esteem and confidence for Alaska Natives, particularly youth, and a strong cultural identity and knowledge of self translates into a stronger person overall. In a recent early childhood development study (McIvor 2005), University of Victoria, B.C. researchers and speech pathologists working with Canadian First Nations have documented strong linkages between indigenous children who have a strong traditional cultural and linguistic background and academic and overall well-being.

Our vision is to promote intergenerational learning from within the indigenous Alaskan community. ANHC has sought to advocate for active language learning by hosting learning sessions for several Alaska Native languages, including Unangax (Aleut), Sugstun (Alutiiq), Ifupiaq, Tlingit, and Yup'ik, while the most thorough instructional efforts have been for Dena'ina Athabascan. Further efforts are underway as ANHC seeks Administration for Native



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Americans (ANA) grant funds, through the United States Department of Health and Social Services. The project will assess and identify local and statewide resources and partnerships that could be made available to Alaska Natives living in Anchorage, for teaching languages within the Eskimo-Aleut speaking, Athabascan speaking, and Tlingit/Haida/Tsimshian/Eyak speaking nations.

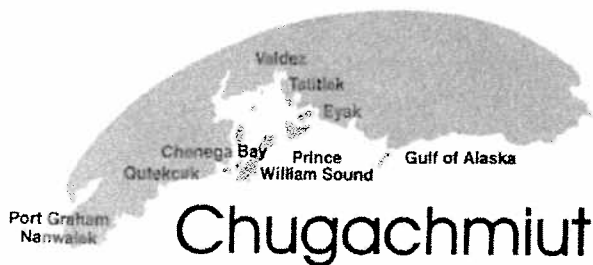
Progressively, ANHC is working to develop programs on site at the Center to provide indigenous language learning opportunities in a full immersion environment. Such opportunities are urgently needed at a time when all 19 indigenous languages still spoken in Alaska are endangered or critically endangered. The passing in 2008 of Chief Marie Smith Jones, the last fluent speaker of Eyak, underscores the vulnerability of Alaska Native languages.

SB 130 / HB 254 will help provide the much-needed political infrastructure, as well as resources both human and financial, to build and follow policies within and outside the state government, to promote sustainable Alaska Native language efforts. Meaningful investment by the State of Alaska in the cultural strengthening of Alaska Native languages will not only contribute to a stronger Alaska Native society, but a stronger Alaska as a whole, and therefore warrants the highest legislative priority.

I am available to discuss this matter, and provide verbal or written testimony to further provide evidence for these facts, in my vehement support for SB 130 / HB 254.

Sincerely,

Annette Evans Smith, President & CEO
Alaska Native Heritage Center



January 18, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
Alaska State Capitol Room 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

Chugachmiut appreciates your introduction of SB 130 for the purpose of establishing an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council within the State of Alaska. We fully support the bill and encourage the legislature to adopt it this year.

As I reflect on the Suqpiak language spoken in our area, and how close it came to extinction, I am comforted that federal language grants have given us an opportunity to preserve it and teach a new generation of speakers. Yet we are losing our teachers at a very rapid rate. One of our few Elder speakers passed away recently and we feel the loss deeply. We relied extensively on him to help guide our language restoration efforts.

Our tribes are clear and focused on preservation of Suqpiak and teaching our youth. Nanwalek has struggled for years to support an immersion school. We are now finding some acceptance for language instruction in our public schools. Chugachmiut has collaborated with the 2 school districts with schools in our villages over the past 2 years and we hope to see more in the future.

An Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council as proposed in your bill would be extremely beneficial to our language preservation effort. Please let us know what we can do to support it.

Respectfully,

Patrick M. Anderson
Executive Director



January 18, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
Community and Regional Affairs Committee Chair
State of Alaska
State Capitol Building Rm 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Honorable Senator Olson:

I am writing to convey my support for Senate Bill 130, a bill to establish an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council. The creation of such a council is desperately needed and is long overdue.

In recognition of the languages of the Alaska Native peoples being treasures, and in support of our own efforts, as indigenous peoples, to maintain and develop our languages, it is my belief that the State of Alaska should make it a policy to act and assist the effort to revitalize, maintain, and development of the languages of Alaska's indigenous people with the creation of an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council.

In addition to a making a shift from a past colonial government policies which have devastated languages and cultures of Alaska's indigenous peoples, and current policies which have perpetuated their decline, significant resources should also be applied to implement the initial and on-going activities of the Council. Time is of the essence as we continue to have elders and best indigenous language speakers pass on. As our languages are restored and valued for the treasures that they are Alaska will become a richer place for all.

I understand you are compiling a list of people to provide testimony during the first committee hearing with State Affairs which is chaired by Senator Wielechowski. I am willing to testify by phone during the committee hearing which is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24th at 9:30am. I could be available to call in at about 9:15 if I am provided the opportunity.

Thank you for sponsoring this legislation and for your support of the Alaska Native peoples of Alaska.

Shesh t'qe\ani,



Jonathon S. Ross
President and Principle Consultant





23 January 2012

Honorable Donny Olson, Senator
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

It brings me gratification to see the introduction of Senate Bill 130 - Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council, "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration and revitalization of Alaska Native Languages."

I have been working in the field of language preservation and perpetuation for nearly 40 years and have seen first hand the extreme decline of the Iñupiaq language. A handful of our people have devoted their lives to teaching it in the hopes of reversing this loss. Much remains to be done.

I write in support of the bill and urge passage. Having an Advisory Council whose responsibility would be to advocate for Native languages across the state will go a long ways towards creating an atmosphere where we can realize a shift in language priorities in Alaska. It is high time the state recognize the importance of perpetuating the languages of its indigenous peoples.

Quyanaq.

Respectfully yours,

Jana Harcharek, Director
Inupiaq Education



January 20, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
State Capitol Building
Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support of SB 130, Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

Dear Senator Olson:

In the majestic forests of Southeast Alaska, along the coastlines of *Haa Aani* (Our Land), our people have gathered in the clan houses and told our stories for thousands of years, passing down the wisdom of Elders and the richness of our culture for generations. This oral history stood unbroken for centuries, but now the languages of the Alaska Native people face extinction. It is imperative that these languages be preserved and with them, the foundation of Alaska Native cultures and ancient traditional knowledge.

Sealaska Corporation offers its overwhelming support of SB 130, An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages. Sealaska urges the Alaska State Legislature and Governor of Alaska to also champion an allocation of funds to programs that restore Alaska Native Languages.

We can all be part of a solution to address the many challenges facing Alaska Natives. Native youth have been shown to improve academic performance when taught in their Native tongue; healthy self-esteem has been linked to a strong sense of identity; and thriving communities are built on the foundation of strong family relationships and lines of communication.

Please share this letter of support to any extent that it might encourage others to vote for the passage of SB 130, and secure funding for programs to restore the words of our ancestors.

Sincerely,

Albert Kookesh, Board Chair
SEALASKA CORPORATION



CITY OF BARROW

"Farthest North Incorporated City"

21 January 2012

Senator Donald C. Olson
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol, Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

FAX: 907-465-4821

SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of Senate Bill 130

Good afternoon, Senator Olson:

The Administration, Council and I personally, wish to commend you on the introduction of Senate Bill 130, Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council, in the Alaska State Legislature. We understand that the first hearing on this bill will be presented in hearing tomorrow, 24 January 2012, in the Committee for State Affairs. Because of our short notice on this hearing, please submit and accept this letter as the City of Barrow's unqualified but interim support in this effort.

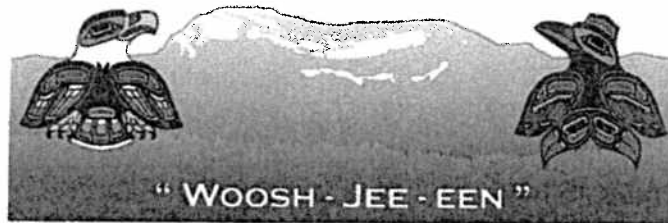
For the Barrow City Council meeting this Thursday, 26 January 2012, I have submitted a formal resolution indicating the City's unqualified endorsement of this legislation for Council ratification. On Friday of this week, I will send you a copy of that ratified endorsement for your files.

Senator Olson, I commend you on taking the initiative of introducing this long-overdue and necessary piece of legislation. I look forward in discussing its progress through the legislature with you. If there is any way that the City of Barrow can assist in facilitating its passage, please do not hesitate to contact me. I also look forward to visiting you in Juneau during the second week in February.

Cordially,

Bob Harcharek, Mayor

Cc: Mayor Charlotte Brower, NSB
Barrow City Council
Superintendent Peggy Cowan, NSBSD
Jana Harcharek, Director Bilingual Education NSBSD
Files



HUNA HERITAGE FOUNDATION

9301 GLACIER HIGHWAY #210 • JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801

(907) 523-3682 • (907) 789-1896 (FAX)

HERITAGE@HUNATOTEM.COM • HUNAHERITAGE.ORG

January 23, 2012

Senator Donald C. Olson
Alaska State Capitol Rm 508
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

The Huna Heritage Foundation wholeheartedly supports Senate Bill 130 which would establish the Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council to assess the State of Alaska Native Languages and re-evaluate the programs within the state and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to establish new programs or reorganize the current programs.

SB 130 would help to preserve and maintain Alaska Native Languages which are critical to the preservation and cultural ideas and traditions of all Alaska Natives.

We believe that SB130 would support indigenous languages and help stem the tide of language extinction within the great state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marlene Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Marlene" being more prominent than the last name "Johnson".

Marlene Johnson
Board President
Huna Heritage Foundation