

My name is Eileen Grant. I am the allotment specialist for Tanana Chiefs Conference.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference region covers an area of 235,000 square miles in interior Alaska. This is about 37 percent of the entire state of Alaska. We are organized as Dena' Nena' Henash or "Our Land Speaks." In 1915, Tribal Chiefs from throughout our region banded together to protect our native land rights, an issue that continued after Alaska's statehood in 1959 and is still relevant today. We are a Tribal consortium consisting of 42 Tribes of Interior Alaska.

Senate Bill 42 is very important to Tanana Chiefs Conference and its Tribal members. I am working on 92 cases where the allotment land was given to the state in error. The state has refused to give that land back to its original applicant or the heirs. Many of the 92 cases are very old. That means the original applicant began using their allotment many years ago. In fact, all of the applicants of the 92 cases began using their allotments long before the state selected the land and before we were even a State. Every one of the 92 allotment applications have been approved by the United State, Bureau of Land Management.

One such applicant began using his land in 1950. The state selected this land in 1961. BLM gave the state his allotment in error. After BLM approved his allotment, the state refused to give it back because his allotment is now located within the Tanana Valley State Forest. However, as courts have said, this applicant has a preference right to his allotment because he began his use first. There are many other similar examples; 92 examples in fact.

Other Tribes in Alaska have identical problems. And, we support each other in trying our best to move forward with these cases. I've been working on my cases for over 18 years. Not much has moved forward. That is why S 42 is so important and I therefore request this committee to approve it.

Thank you,



Eileen Grant
Allotment Sepcialist