



April 19, 2021

The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky
Alaska House of Representatives
Alaska State Capitol Room 416
Juneau, AK 99801
Via Email: Representative.Tiffany.Zulkosky@akleg.gov

RE: House Bill 123, State Recognition of Tribes

Dear Representative Zulkosky,

Copper River Native Association strongly supports House Bill 123—an act providing for State recognition of Federally Recognized Tribes. Copper River Native Association is located in the Ahtna Region of Alaska serving five compacted Tribes, Native Village of Cantwell, Gakona, Gulkana, Kluti-Kaah and Tazlina. We believe House Bill 123 will empower and strengthen the Tribes we serve to continue the tradition of caring for the region, long into the future.

House Bill 123 establishes formal state policy that the state's indigenous peoples have their own governments and that the government of the State of Alaska will no longer deny their existence. This is an important step in strengthening the partnership between the State of Alaska and Alaska Native tribes. House Bill 123 recognizes and enhances the capacity of Alaska Native tribes to continue their longstanding tradition of providing vital resources to the state of Alaska.

In 1970, President Nixon, in his special message on Indian affairs to the United States Congress, recognized the contribution of the Indian in America as:

“A record also of endurance, of survival, of adaptation and creativity in the face of overwhelming obstacles. It is a record of enormous contributions to this country—to its art and culture, to its strength and spirit, to its sense of history and its sense of purpose. It is long past the time that the Indian policies of the Federal government began to recognize and build upon the capacities and insights of the Indian people.”

The Alaska Legislature can choose to recognize those capacities and honor the enormous contributions of Alaska Natives. House Bill 123 marks the trail toward bringing future resources and prosperity to all Alaskans through a strengthened partnership with Alaska Tribes. We are

encouraged by the introduction of this legislation, and we look forward to supporting its passage through the Legislature.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Paul Rude", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul Rude, CEO
Copper River Native Association