



Alaska Native Health Board

THE VOICE OF ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SINCE 1968

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March 10, 2022

The Honorable Michael Shower
Chair, Committee on State Affairs
Alaska Senate
Alaska State Capitol Room 429
Juneau, AK 99801
Via Email: Senator.Mike.Shower@akleg.gov

RE: House Bill 123, State Recognition of Tribes

Dear Chair Shower,

The Alaska Native Health Board¹ strongly supports House Bill 123—an act providing for State recognition of Federally Recognized Tribes. 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 respects 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.”

Alaska Native Tribes have already contributed so much to the State of Alaska, and there is no better example of this than the Alaska Tribal Health System. The Alaska Tribal Health System, through the Alaska Tribal Health Compact with the

¹ ANHB was established in 1968 with the purpose of promoting the spiritual, physical, mental, social, and cultural well-being and pride of Alaska Native people. ANHB is the statewide voice on Alaska Native health issues and is the advocacy organization for the Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS), which is comprised of tribal health programs that serve all of the 229 Tribes and 180,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people throughout the state. The ATHS administers clinical and public health programs for AI/AN people throughout the state of Alaska. As the statewide tribal health advocacy organization, ANHB supports Alaska's Tribes and Tribal programs achieve effective consultation and communication with state and federal agencies on matters of concern.

ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

ALEUTIAN PRIBILOF
ISLANDS ASSOCIATION

ARCTIC SLOPE
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

BRISTOL BAY AREA
HEALTH CORPORATION

CHICKALOON VILLAGE
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

CHUGACHMIUT

COPPER RIVER
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

COUNCIL OF ATHABASCAN
TRIBAL GOVERNMENTS

EASTERN ALEUTIAN TRIBES

KARLUK IRA
TRIBAL COUNCIL

KENAITZE INDIAN TRIBE

KETCHIKAN
INDIAN COMMUNITY

KODIAK AREA
NATIVE ASSOCIATION

MANILA ASSOCIATION

METLAKATLA INDIAN
COMMUNITY

MT. SANFORD
TRIBAL CONSORTIUM

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF EKLUTNA

NATIVE VILLAGE OF EYAK

NATIVE VILLAGE
OF TYONEK

NINILCHIK
TRADITIONAL COUNCIL

NORTON SOUND
HEALTH CORPORATION

SELDOVIA VILLAGE TRIBE

SOUTHCENTRAL
FOUNDATION

SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL
HEALTH CONSORTIUM

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE

YAKUTAT TLINGIT TRIBE

YUKON-KUSKOKWIM
HEALTH CORPORATION

VALDEZ NATIVE TRIBE

U.S. Indian Health Service, successfully provides health care, mental health care, and public health to over 180,000 Alaskans, including Alaska Native and American Indian people, veterans, and rural Alaskans. Partnership between the Alaska Native Tribes can improve outcomes for all Alaskans, as was demonstrated in the COVID-19 vaccination effort. Recognition of Alaska Native Tribes will only stand to deepen this partnership.

The Alaska Legislature can choose to recognize these capacities and honor the enormous contributions of Alaska Native peoples. With passage of this bill, it will deepen Tribal collaborations that will contribute to the state's prosperity. House Bill 123 marks the trail toward bringing future resources and prosperity to all Alaskans through a strengthened partnership with Alaska Tribes. We urge the Committee to pass House Bill 123 to recognize the integral role that Alaska Native Tribes have made to the State of Alaska. Thank you and the Committee for this opportunity.

Duk'idli (Respectfully),

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

Diana L. Zirul, Tribally-Elected Leader, Kenaitze Tribal Council
Chair, Alaska Native Health Board
ATHC Co-Lead Negotiator, Alaska Tribal Health Compact

CC: The Honorable Tiffany Zulkosky

