

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE
HOUSE JUDICIARY STANDING COMMITTEE**

January 23, 2008

1:05 p.m.

MEMBERS PRESENT

Representative Jay Ramras, Chair
Representative Nancy Dahlstrom, Vice Chair
Representative John Coghill
Representative Bob Lynn
Representative Ralph Samuels
Representative Lindsey Holmes

MEMBERS ABSENT

Representative Max Gruenberg

COMMITTEE CALENDAR

OVERVIEW(S): CHANLYUT

- HEARD

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 27

Proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the State of Alaska authorizing a contractual limitation on taxes related to the production of gas for the purpose of providing fiscal certainty for the construction of a natural gas pipeline.

- SCHEDULED BUT NOT HEARD

PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION

No previous action to record

WITNESS REGISTER

GLORIA O'NEILL, President/CEO
Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.(CITC)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Presented an overview of the Chanlyut Corporation Program.

LISA RIEGER, Vice President; General Counsel
Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc.(CITC)
Anchorage, Alaska

POSITION STATEMENT: Answered questions during overview of the Chanlyut Corporation Program.

ACTION NARRATIVE

CHAIR JAY RAMRAS called the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting to order at [1:05:19 PM](#). Representatives Dahlstrom, Coghill, Samuels, Lynn, Holmes, and Ramras were present at the call to order.

OVERVIEW(S): CHANLYUT

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CHAIR RAMRAS announced that the only order of business would be the overview regarding Chanlyut Corporation Programs.

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GLORIA O'NEILL, President/CEO, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC), stated that she is a lifelong Alaskan who wants to make a difference in her community. She has been employed by the CITC for the past 15 years and has held her current position for the past 10 years. She explained that CITC is the parent organization for the Chanlyut project. She explained that CITC is a tribal nonprofit social services provider that focuses on the Southcentral region of Alaska. CITC has moved from being a traditional social services provider towards a model that creates opportunities and encourages self sufficiency and personal accountability, she noted. The CITC's mission is to work in partnership with people and to develop opportunities that fulfill people's potential. CITC's believes in serving people "with a hand up rather than a handout." She opined that CITC provides "cradle to grave" social services whose focus is education and youth. She stated that CITC invests about \$3 million annually in the Anchorage School District, providing opportunities to about 700 Alaska Native youth. The organization also focuses on workforce development and is currently the largest tribal welfare to work provider in the United States. She opined that last year the CITC moved 700 Alaska Native families from welfare to jobs. She said she hopes to create job training opportunities for Alaska natives. The CITC's goals are to become less reliant on the United States government and to generate more of its own revenue. She opined that this mission helps leverage social services dollars more effectively.

MS. O'NEILL explained that CITC currently offers approximately 50 programs to the 40,000 native people living in Southcentral Alaska. She noted that last year CITC served over 6,000 individuals. She said she felt that CITC's services will become even more important due to the migration of the native population from rural Alaska to urban communities. One of the reasons that CITC started the Chanlyut program was that it embodies the beliefs of personal accountability that the organization supports.

MS. O'NEILL showed a video presentation in which clients of Chanlyut provided information about their personal situations and goals. One unidentified male said he is a felon and that next week he will be off probation for the first time in 10 years. He stated that "Chanlyut" is a Dena'ina Athabascan word that means new beginnings. He related that Chanlyut gives people who face drug and alcohol addictions an opportunity for a new start.

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MS. O'NEILL offered that the power of Chanlyut is derived from its residents. She pointed out that Chanlyut is modeled after a successful Delancey Street Foundation project called "Delancey Street, San Francisco" which has operated for over 30 years without any state funds. She noted that the San Francisco facility houses 500 ex-convicts who work in a setting that feels comfortable to visitors. The success and recidivism rate of 27 percent in the Delancey Street, San Francisco facility, offers Chanlyut hope for promising results as compared to the Alaska prison system and its recidivism rate. She stated that CITC is one of four groups that have worked with the Delancey Street Foundation over the past five years.

MS. O'NEILL continued by stating that Chanlyut is not state funded. Instead, it is totally funded by the businesses that accept residents as employees and by private donations. Participants engage in business management and develop personal responsibility and self-sufficiency in the program, she opined. Currently, the program assists men to recover from substance abuse and chronic homelessness. Although, she added, that phase three of the program would add women to the program. The CITC's mission is based on accountability and the Chanlyut residents must make a two year commitment to the program. She opined that CITC has high expectations for its clients. Many traditional treatment programs span 30 days to one year, she offered. However, that amount of time is not sufficient enough for many

of Chanlyut's clients to make lifestyle changes. One element of the program assists clients in gaining paraprofessional skills and the CITC hopes to add other educational components in the near future. In order to be accepted, the potential client must demonstrate a willingness to learn and care for self, others, and the community.

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MS. O'NEILL offered that the Anchorage Assembly unanimously supported proposed changes to the municipal ordinances and other changes necessary to allow CITC to continue to operate the program that can assist to 20 residents. In July 2007, Chanlyut began to operate a diner that is open for breakfast and lunch Monday through Saturday. Clients take part in all operations, she noted. She reported that the current positive cash flow from the diner activities will be reinvested into the program. In addition to initial facility costs, the CITC is in partnership with the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Rasmusson Foundation. Community members have donated seed money to help the start the enterprises and due to zoning changes, the Chanlyut facility now provides one alternative to incarceration. She noted that the CITC looks forward to signing a joint Memorandum of Understanding for its 20-bed facility, which could potentially result in cost savings of \$420,000 per year.

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LISA RIEGER, Vice President; General Counsel, Cook Inlet Tribal Council, Inc. (CITC), noted that the video committee members viewed was not scripted. She recalled that Chair Ramras visited the Delancey Street program in San Francisco. She shared her enthusiasm for the great potential for the Chanlyut program in Alaska. She pointed out that the Delancey Street Foundation project is comprised of five locations nationwide and will not expand further. However, the Eisenhower Foundation's desire to replicate the Delancey Street program's success elsewhere led to CITC being one of the five sites selected nationwide. She echoed the philosophical tenet mentioned earlier which is one of self-reliance and self-sufficiency. She stated that the principal of healing thorough helping others is a message that is reinforced to their clients. She said, "There is always someone two days behind you and two days ahead of you." She related that Mimi Silbert, who is the President and CEO of the Delancey Street Foundation, once said, "We are all on this mountain together holding hands and we can either pull all of us down or we can pull all of us up."

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MS. RIEGER offered that Chanlyut uses the two prongs of extended family and education as the means to help people move up the mountain together. She stated the idea stems from the Delancey Street facility on the Lower East side of New York City where immigrants arrived in the country and learned from immigrants already here how to negotiate in the United States. They learned English, how to dress, and how to find the library from the immigrants already residing in New York City. "Maintenance" is the first step of the Chanlyut program and clients initially work 16-hour days and are too tired to disrupt others. The second step of the program is "immigration" in which clients learn to navigate a bit more and the third phase is when clients become part of the "academy" and to lead others.

MS. RIEGER opined that their clients are really re-learning social behaviors. She said that it is similar to the person having his life on a tape recorder, that he can press stop and replay the activity to discover what is not okay. Clients eventually learn how to act as a productive member of society, she offered. No one else will do things for the clients, such as opening the diner in the morning, so the clients begin to realize that they must perform their own assignments.

MS. O'NEILL relayed that one of the clients was grouching about his responsibilities and she offered that her response was to ask him, "What do you think that we have to do every day?"

CHAIR RAMRAS recalled his visit to the Delancey Street Foundation facility in San Francisco. He suggested that members should take steps to visit the project in San Francisco and should entertain the possibility of expanding CITC's Chanlyut program to a 100 bed facility due to the remarkably low recidivism rate that is possible for this program. He explained that the Delancey Street San Francisco project consists of five businesses, one of which is a restaurant. Typically, he said that restaurant costs are divided into three roughly equal expenses consisting of food, labor, and overhead. In the Delancey Street San Francisco restaurant, the clients are not paid and their payroll and any gratuities help to fund the program. Other business models in the Delancey project include one of the largest moving companies and a Christmas ornament business with sales of about \$1 million per year. He characterized the Delancey San Francisco project as almost beyond description. He opined that some of the problems that

the Chanlyut program currently experiences are due to its small scale. He noted that so many people that are incarcerated cannot find any way out, but with the Chanlyut program they might see a glimmer of an opportunity to succeed.

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MS. O'NEILL, in response to Representative Holmes, answered that the program began in 2006. In further response to Representative Holmes, Ms. O'Neill responded that 6 or 7 people are currently in the program, but offered that it has a capacity of up to 20 people. She surmised that the 100 percent ownership must come from the residents, which she opined is the key ingredient to making the Chanlyut program a success. She noted that some of the early clients are currently making huge shifts towards gaining the necessary leadership abilities. She said she anticipates expanding the residency to 20 clients by early summer and will work to develop the necessary leadership necessary before expanding to a larger program.

CHAIR RAMRAS offered his understanding that one of the philosophical approaches that the Delancey Street Foundation took was to understand that many people are drawn to the social services fields for the tremendous rewards derived from serving the segment of the population. The Delancey Street Foundation's premise is that the community should derive its self-reliance, which should not be strained through the social services community. Therefore, some elements of the population are excluded from participating in the program such as sex offenders and the mentally ill.

MS. RIEGER also pointed out that the inmates and clients know "every trick in the book" so they aren't easily fooled by anything that a new client might try.

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REPRESENTATIVE HOLMES asked who qualifies for the program and for Ms. O'Neill to describe the referral process for the Chanlyut program.

MS. O'NEILL surmised that the program is open to anyone who is having difficulties in life. Currently, the program has received client referrals from judges and parole officers. She offered that the homeless, those suffering from drug or alcohol addictions, and those released from prison are eligible to participate in the program. She noted that potential clients

are interviewed to determine whether this program is the appropriate choice for them. The Chanlyut program reinforces success at every turn. Thus, the selection process is very important and valuable.

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MS. O'NEILL, in response to Representative Lynn, surmised that the Chanlyut program chose to focus on one gender in order to develop leadership skills. She also pointed out that the prison population in prison is comprised of mostly men. She said she envisions that the Chanlyut program will have coed facilities at some point in the future.

REPRESENTATIVE SAMUELS related his understanding that a person would apply for and be accepted into the residential facility. He inquired as to whether that person would undergo or participate in any outside treatment during the two year program.

MS. RIEGER said that three people are trained for each job so that when a person graduates from the program, someone steps in to take the job. Initially, residents are assigned to wash dishes, but she noted that the day is split up by meetings. If someone has been ordered to participate in alcohol or drug treatment programs, the person is referred to CITC for service offsite. Another option available to clients is to take parenting and anger management classes provided by the CITC. She opined that the Chanlyut program consists of 24 hours a day of behavior modification and residents are not free to leave the facility. This initial group of residents built the diner as a labor component of the program. These clients have now progressed and are moving into the service component at the diner.

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MS. O'NEILL characterized the residents as being part of a structured family and as clients progress into leadership roles, they take on a role that is similar to a parental role. The resident's routine is comprised of work, but the facility will soon add an option to attend afternoon classes at the University of Alaska Anchorage. She noted that when a client shops for food for the diner, another client in a leadership role accompanies him. She pointed out that the program is based on structure and accountability at every level.

CHAIR RAMRAS pointed out one of the unusual aspects of the original program is that it does not contain a faith based component.

REPRESENTATIVE SAMUELS inquired as to whether the monitoring is all in-house.

MS. O'NEILL answered that the residents monitor one another. In fact, she said that some clients have been removed from the program due to behavior. In further response to Representative Samuels, Ms. O'Neill explained that the difference between the Delancey Street Foundation and the Chanlyut project is that the Delancey Street Foundation does not use state funds. One downside to that is that the foundation does not track clients as closely as she envisions the Chanlyut program will be able to do.

REPRESENTATIVE SAMUELS expressed concern that some state programs have difficulty tracking recidivism when the person leaves the state. He also inquired as to whether other business ventures will be considered.

MS. O'NEILL offered that the leadership clients at Chanlyut will be involved in the decision making process for any new venture. She noted that the current director has art frame shop business experience, which may lead to a new venture.

MS. RIEGER pointed out that all of the ventures that will be considered for the Chanlyut project need to be high labor intensive enterprises that require relatively small capital outlays in order to succeed.

CHAIR RAMRAS inquired as to whether Chanlyut will reach out to other communities via the prison system such that inmates could apply to participate in the program.

MS. O'NEILL surmised that Chanlyut is starting out in the same way as the model program started 30-35 years ago. She envisioned that the Chanlyut program would progress in the same way. She expects the program to first expand services in Anchorage and later to expand services to other communities.

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REPRESENTATIVE SAMUELS asked whether creating competition with private industry is a concern.

MS. O'NEILL answered that the Chanlyut program has not received any comments about competition from private industry to date. She opined that relationships that have been formed with the Mountain View Community Council are positive. She surmised that Chanlyut will work to form similar relationships with the business community as the program expands. She expressed confidence that the Chanlyut program will be able to work through any competition issues. She pointed out that one of the Anchorage chefs has currently been assisting the diner residents acquire restaurant skills.

MS. RIEGER, in response to Representative Lynn, explained that the facility has 16 beds in an open dorm and 4 beds in 2 separate bedrooms. This setting allows clients to progress in leadership roles to earn privacy.

The committee took an at-ease from 2:08 p.m. to 2:20 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the committee, the House Judiciary Standing Committee meeting was adjourned at 2:21 p.m.