

**ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE**  
**SENATE COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE**

February 6, 2024

1:37 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT**

Senator Forrest Dunbar, Chair  
Senator Elvi Gray-Jackson  
Senator Jesse Bjorkman

**MEMBERS ABSENT**

Senator Donald Olson, Vice Chair  
Senator Cathy Giessel

**COMMITTEE CALENDAR**

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13

Encouraging the United States Congress and the President of the United States to pass and sign legislation amending the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to release certain land held in trust back to affected Alaska Native village corporations.

- MOVED SJR 13 OUT OF COMMITTEE

**PREVIOUS COMMITTEE ACTION**

BILL: SJR 13

SHORT TITLE: AMEND ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT

SPONSOR(s): SENATOR(s) DUNBAR

01/26/24	(S)	READ THE FIRST TIME - REFERRALS
01/26/24	(S)	CRA
02/01/24	(S)	CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)
02/01/24	(S)	Heard & Held
02/01/24	(S)	MINUTE(CRA)
02/06/24	(S)	CRA AT 1:30 PM BELTZ 105 (TSBldg)

**WITNESS REGISTER**

MARJORIE MERRY, President  
Baan O Yeel Kon Corporation  
Fairbanks, Alaska

**POSITION STATEMENT:** Testified in support of SJR 13.

## **ACTION NARRATIVE**

[1:37:27 PM](#)

**CHAIR FORREST DUNBAR** called the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting to order at 1:37 p.m. Present at the call to order were Senators Gray-Jackson, Bjorkman, and Chair Dunbar.

### **SJR 13-AMEND ALASKA NATIVE CLAIMS SETTLEMENT ACT**

[1:38:04 PM](#)

**CHAIR DUNBAR** announced the consideration of SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 13 Encouraging the United States Congress and the President of the United States to pass and sign legislation amending the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to release certain land held in trust back to affected Alaska Native village corporations.

This is the second hearing of SJR 13 in the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Committee. The intention is to open public testimony and move SJR 13 from the committee.

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**CHAIR DUNBAR** opened public testimony on SJR 13.

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**MARJORIE MERRY**, President, Baan O Yeel Kon Corporation (BOYK), Fairbanks, Alaska, stated BOYK is the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) corporation for the federally recognized tribe of Rampart Village, where she is a tribal member. Initially, Rampart Village enrolled 174 individuals. It now has over 200 shareholders, many of whom still reside there. The Rampart Village Council governs the community, maintaining essential services like the power plant, washeteria, school, health clinic, communications equipment, road service, landfill, and all the other services a typical municipality would assume.

**MS. MERRY** stated that BOYK supports the Rampart Village Council in enhancing its community's health, safety, and well-being, as all shareholders are tribal members. She described the location of BOYK-selected lands and noted that sec. 14(c)(3) of ANCSA has been problematic since its passage. BOYK has always supported Rampart, but most village lands are far outside the city center. She said that 50 years ago, it was difficult for the village to anticipate future municipal land needs. As a result, the selection of sec. 14(c)(3) ANCSA lands was not completed. Instead of providing land through the Municipal Land Trust (MLT)

model, BOYK has opted to lease lands directly to the council or transfer deeds via quitclaim.

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MS. MERRY recounted that recently, BOYK quitclaimed ten acres to the Rampart Village Council for a new landfill, a critical community need. She said that BOYK attempted to transfer land into the Municipal Land Trust, but MLT rejected the application. While BOYK wishes to comply with all the terms of ANCSA, it has a duty to support its shareholders and community. She described land processing delays due to an understaffed and underfunded MLT program, emphasizing that it takes MLT years to accept land selections into the trust. She opined that the management of MLT has been one of the major impediments to rural Alaska's economic development.

MS. MERRY urged full consideration of SJR 13 and thanked the chair for bringing it before the legislature.

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CHAIR DUNBAR closed public testimony on SJR 13.

CHAIR DUNBAR solicited the will of the committee.

[1:43:29 PM](#)

SENATOR GRAY-JACKSON moved to report SJR 13, work order 33-LS1205\B, from committee with individual recommendations and any attached fiscal note(s).

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CHAIR DUNBAR found no objection and SJR 13 was reported from the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee.

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At ease.

[1:44:06 PM](#)

CHAIR DUNBAR reconvened the meeting.

[1:44:20 PM](#)

There being no further business to come before the committee, Chair Dunbar adjourned the Senate Community and Regional Affairs Standing Committee meeting at 1:44 p.m.