

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 33

IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA

THIRTY-FOURTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY REPRESENTATIVE BYNUM

Introduced: 2/18/26

Referred: House Special Committee on Tribal Affairs

A RESOLUTION

1 **Encouraging the United States Congress to provide a legal resolution to inequitable**
2 **aboriginal land claims in the state; and encouraging the Alaska delegation in Congress**
3 **to work with affected communities in the state.**

4 **BE IT RESOLVED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

5 **WHEREAS** the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, enacted in 1971, was intended
6 to provide a legal resolution of aboriginal land claims in the state; and

7 **WHEREAS** several Alaska Native communities in Southeast Alaska were excluded
8 from forming village or urban corporations and therefore did not receive land entitlements
9 under the Act; and

10 **WHEREAS** the Study of Five Southeast Alaska Communities, prepared by the
11 University of Alaska Anchorage at the direction of the 103rd United States Congress, found
12 there was no clear, justifiable, or documented reason for the exclusion of five Southeast
13 Alaska communities; and

14 **WHEREAS** the excluded communities, commonly referred to as "landless" Alaska
15 Native communities, are Haines, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Wrangell, and Tenakee; and

1 **WHEREAS** the exclusion of these communities from land entitlements under the
2 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act has resulted in long-standing disparities, including
3 disparities in economic opportunity, land stewardship, and community development, to the
4 Alaska Native residents in those communities as compared to other Alaska Native
5 communities in the state; and

6 **WHEREAS** the United States Congress has periodically considered legislation to
7 address this inequity by amending the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to recognize
8 these Southeast Alaska Native communities and provide a path to land entitlement and
9 corporate formation consistent with the intent of the original Act; and

10 **WHEREAS** equitable treatment of Alaska Native communities under federal law is
11 essential to honoring the intent of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act and supporting
12 long-term economic self-determination, cultural continuity, and community stability across
13 the state; and

14 **WHEREAS** resolving this issue is a matter of federal law and responsibility, and state
15 recognition and support can help reinforce the importance of a fair and lasting solution;

16 **BE IT RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature expresses its support for federal
17 legislation that fairly and comprehensively addresses the historically unjustifiable exclusion
18 of Alaska Native communities in Southeast Alaska from land entitlements under the Alaska
19 Native Claims Settlement Act; and be it

20 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature urges the United States
21 Congress to enact legislation that provides an equitable and responsible resolution for these
22 landless Alaska Native communities in a manner consistent with the original purposes of the
23 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act; and be it

24 **FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Alaska State Legislature encourages the state's
25 congressional delegation to continue directly involving and working collaboratively with
26 affected communities, Alaska Native organizations, and other stakeholders to achieve a fair
27 and durable outcome.

28 **COPIES** of this resolution shall be sent to the Honorable Donald J. Trump, President
29 of the United States; the Honorable JD Vance, Vice President of the United States and
30 President of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker of the U.S. House of
31 Representatives; the Honorable Chuck Grassley, President pro tempore of the U.S. Senate; the

1 Honorable John Thune, Majority Leader of the U.S. Senate; the Honorable Mike Lee, Chair
2 of the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources; the Honorable Bruce
3 Westerman, Chair of the U.S. House Committee on Natural Resources; the Honorable
4 Douglas Burgum, United States Secretary of the Interior; and the Honorable Lisa Murkowski
5 and the Honorable Dan Sullivan, U.S. Senators, and the Honorable Nicholas Begich, U.S.
6 Representative, members of the Alaska delegation in Congress.