

S B

727



CHUGACH NATIVES, INC.

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February 17, 1982

Senator John Sackett
Pouch V
Juneau, AK 99811

Dear Senator Sackett:

Chugach Natives, Inc., strongly supports your proposal in S.B. 727 providing for the State Geographic Names Board to consider naming unnamed geographic features in Alaska with an appropriate Native name. In the Chugach Region we have worked closely with the Alaska Native Language Center at the University of Alaska in Fairbanks to collect these names over the past several years. We have gathered several hundred to date, and many more remain to be discussed among our older shareholders.

While your bill provides for the use of Native place names on currently unnamed geographic features, you might also consider imbuing the Geographic Names Board with the additional authority to re-name existing features with Native names. This authority would have to be exercised judiciously so as not to create widespread confusion. However, in many instances the Native names are more commonly used even today than the official names of places, and these are the cases which could be addressed under this additional authority.

Sincerely,

CHUGACH NATIVES, INC.

Carl Pross for
Edgar Blatchford
Chairman of the Board

EB/ls

cc: State Affairs Committee members
Alaska Native Language Center

POSITION PAPER
SENATE BILL 727

Senate Bill 727, "An Act relating to the duties of the State Geographic Names Board; and providing for an effective date" would establish a policy to conduct research and to provide names for unnamed geographic features in Alaska utilizing Alaska Native place names.

Members of the Alaska State Geographic Names Board believe that S. B. 727 is unnecessary because Alaska Native place names are given full consideration under current Board policy. The Board is not responsible for proposing name selections; proposals are received from residents of Alaska, private interest groups, corporations and other organizations throughout the State. It is a procedure of the Board to contact the local officials and the appropriate Native organization to ascertain support or opposition to each name proposal. If an organization informs the Board that the feature in question has a traditional name, the original usage is given preference.

In accordance with Alaska Statute Section 44.19.056 the Board is chaired by the Commissioner of Community and Regional Affairs, and consists of the Commissioners of the Department of Natural Resources, Transportation and Public Facilities, Education, the curator of the state museum, the state historical librarian, the director of the division of lands, and one private sector member appointed by the Governor. The Board generally approves a proposal for a name selection if the proposal meets the following criteria:

1. Authenticity of the name can be established.
2. The name is clearly associated with the area proposed.
3. The name is, or was, in common local usage.
4. The name can be spelled according to established system of orthography.
5. The name is pronounceable without considerable difficulty.
6. The name of a stream is applied to an unnamed lake or glacier from which the stream originates.
7. The name of a mountain is applied to an unnamed glacier which is a part of that mountain.
8. The name is relevant and most descriptive to the feature.
9. The name is not in use elsewhere in the Region.
10. The name is not frivolous.
11. The name is in good taste.
12. The Board generally approves a commemorative name selection if the individual made a highly significant contribution to Alaska.

All Alaska place names should be evaluated according to these criteria and should come as needed so future generations will have an opportunity to submit geographic names. The Alaska Board would like to encourage Native organizations or individuals to submit names for features in their area as they have an opportunity to investigate and learn the Native names. The Board is not staffed or funded to conduct these investigations.

The Board feels it is appropriate to do a publication specifically on Alaska Native names that would encourage more Native people to participate in name submissions.

Respectfully submitted by members of:

The Alaska State Geographic Names Board
& Commissioner's Office
Community and Regional Affairs
Pouch B
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Please contact Leanne Ellis Pilcher, Executive Secretary of the Alaska State Geographic Names Board (465-4700) if you have further questions.

A M E N D M E N T

SENATE BILL 727

Sec. 44.19.059. ALASKA NATIVE PLACE NAMES. In carrying out its duties to name geographic features under AS 44.19.058 (2) the State Geographic Board shall ~~maintain a policy of considering~~ the use of Alaska Native place names for geographic features in the state that have not previously been named, using Native language writing systems accepted by the Alaska Native Language Center of the University of Alaska at Fairbanks.