

SB

130

<TARGET><BILL>SB 130</BILL><SUBJECT>SB
130</SUBJECT><COMM>SFIN27</COMM></TARGET>

SENATE FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE: 2/3/12

FURTHER:

DATE TURNED
IN TO OFFICE: _____

Finance Committee considered SENATE BILL NO. 130

SB 130 ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE COUNCIL

"An Act establishing in the Office of the Governor an advisory council for the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages."

and recommends:

be replaced with CS _____ (_____) Same Title New Title

adopt previous CS SB 130 (STA) Same Title New Title

attached amendment(s)

adopt _____ Letter of Intent

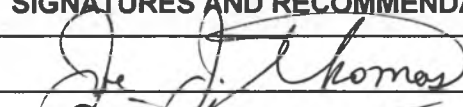

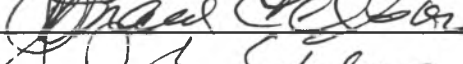
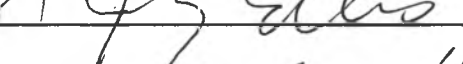

further referral to _____ Committee

Dept Abbr.	
ADM	LEG
CED	LAW
COR	LWF
CRT	MVA
EED	DNR
DEC	DPS
DFG	REV
GOV	DOT
DHS	UA

NEW FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #
DEC	✓			

PREVIOUS FISCAL NOTE(S)				
Dept.	Fiscal	Indet.	Zero	FN #

APPROPRIATION - no fiscal note

SIGNATURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS:	PRINTED LAST NAME	DO PASS	DO NOT PASS	NO REC	AMEND
	Thomas	✓			
	[unclear]	✓			
	OLSON	✓			
	ELLIS	✓			
CO-CHAIR: 	Hoffman	✓			
CO-CHAIR: _____					

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version CSSB 130(STA)
Fiscal Note Number 1
(S) Publish Date 2/3/12

Identifier (file name) SB130-OOG-CNL-1-21-12 Dept. Affected Office of the Governor
Title "An Act establishing an advisory council for the preservation, restoration...of Alaska Native Languages" Appropriation Commissions and Special Offices
Allocation Council for Native Languages
Sponsor Senator Olson
Requester (S) STA OMB Component Number _____

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates					
			FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
OPERATING EXPENDITURES								
Personal Services	168.7		173.6	178.8	183.7	189.0	192.2	
Travel	27.6		27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	27.6	
Services	143.9		143.9	143.9	143.9	143.9	143.9	
Commodities	7.0		7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	
Capital Outlay	40.7							
Grants, Benefits								
Miscellaneous								
TOTAL OPERATING	387.9	0.0	352.1	357.3	362.2	367.5	370.7	

FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)					
1002	Federal Receipts						
1003	GF Match						
1004	GF	387.9	352.1	357.3	362.2	367.5	370.7
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)						
1037	GF/MH (UGF)						
Other	(please identify)						
TOTAL		387.9	0.0	352.1	357.3	362.2	370.7

POSITIONS							
Full-time	2.0		2	2	2	2	2
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES							

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs _____ (separate supplemental appropriation required);
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs _____ (separate capital appropriation required);
(discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

Initial Version.

Prepared by Sunny Haight, Deputy Director
Division Division of Administrative Services
Approved by Guy Bell, Administrative Director
Division of Administrative Services

Phone 465-6468
Date/Time 1/21/12 10:00 AM
Date 1/21/2012

FISCAL NOTE #1

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 130(STA)

Analysis

Fiscal Note assumes:

2 Full time staff:
Research Analyst Rg. 18
Admin. Assist. Rg. 15

7 council members with geographic representation: 2 Anchorage, 1 Juneau, 1 Fairbanks, 1 Bethel, 1 Kotzebue, 1 Barrow

4 face-to-face meetings annually. Additional meetings as necessary via teleconference.

1 Anchorage meeting (Fall)
Transportation: \$3347
Lodging: \$600
M&IE: \$560

1 Juneau meeting (Winter, during session)
Transportation: \$5812
Lodging: \$1320
M&IE: \$1028

1 Fairbanks meeting (Spring)
Transportation: \$4804
Lodging: \$960
M&IE: \$764

1 Bethel meeting (Summer)
Transportation: \$6110
Lodging: \$1400
M&IE: \$852

All meetings assume full council and both staff members in attendance.

Contractual includes core services charges, communications, advertising, printing, office space lease, and postage.

Initial equipment costs reflect set-up of office work stations, computers, phones, fax, copier, etc.

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Bill Version CSSB 130 (STA)
 Fiscal Note Number _____
 () Publish Date _____

Identifier (file name) SB130-DCCED-ANLC-03-02-12 Dept. Affected DCCED
 Title Alaska Native Language Council Appropriation Community and Regional Affairs
 Allocation Community and Regional Affairs
 Sponsor Senator Olson
 Requester Senate Finance OMB Component Number 2879

Expenditures/Revenues (Thousands of Dollars)

Note: Amounts do not include inflation unless otherwise noted below.

	FY13 Appropriation Requested	Included in Governor's FY13 Request	Out-Year Cost Estimates				
			FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
OPERATING EXPENDITURES	FY13	FY13	FY14	FY15	FY16	FY17	FY18
Personal Services	168.7		168.7	168.7	168.7	168.7	168.7
Travel	16.5		16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5	16.5
Services	30.0		30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0	30.0
Commodities	25.0		1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Capital Outlay							
Grants, Benefits							
Miscellaneous							
TOTAL OPERATING	240.2	0.0	216.2	216.2	216.2	216.2	216.2

FUND SOURCE		(Thousands of Dollars)					
1002	Federal Receipts						
1003	GF Match						
1004	GF	240.2	216.2	216.2	216.2	216.2	216.2
1005	GF/Prgm (DGF)						
1037	GF/MH (UGF)						
1178	temp code (UGF)						
TOTAL		240.2	0.0	216.2	216.2	216.2	216.2

POSITIONS							
Full-time	2		2	2	2	2	2
Part-time							
Temporary							

CHANGE IN REVENUES							

Estimated SUPPLEMENTAL (FY12) operating costs 0.0 (separate supplemental appropriation required;
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Estimated CAPITAL (FY13) costs 0.0 (separate capital appropriation required)
 (discuss reasons and fund source(s) in analysis section)

Why this fiscal note differs from previous version (if initial version, please note as such)

This version updates the analysis section to include additional information regarding the duties of the staff.

Prepared by Scott Ruby, Director
 Division Community and Regional Affairs
 Approved by JoEllen Hanrahan, Director Administrative Services
Commerce, Community, and Economic Development

Phone 269-4569
 Date/Time 3/2/12 8:30 PM
 Date 3/3/2012

FISCAL NOTE

STATE OF ALASKA
2012 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

BILL NO. CSSB 130 (STA)

Analysis

SB 130 will establish the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council for the purpose of preserving, restoring, and revitalizing Alaska Native languages.

The Council will consist of five voting members appointed by the Governor and two non-voting members, one from the State Senate and one from the House of Representatives. The Council must meet a minimum of twice a year and may meet telephonically.

Personal Services includes two full time staff, a Research Analyst range 18 and an Administrative Assistant III range 15. Staff for the council will need to identify programs throughout the state that work on similar programs with the goals of this bill. These include programs from elementary schools in rural school districts, high school, adult education, and university programs. There are also programs run by non-profits and native regional organizations that receive public money that will be included.

Each program will need to be analyzed and examined for financial cost and results (cost benefit). Once this is complete and documented, a report will be compiled and provided to the council for review. The council may direct further investigation into the potential for reorganization or combination of programs, and the exploration of further funding.

The Research Analyst will perform research, investigation, and report writing. The Administrative Assistant will perform information gathering, and report editing, finalization and distribution to the council. In addition, this position will coordinate meetings and travel for Council, and provide public information services for the program.

Travel includes airfare, per diem, hotel, and miscellaneous costs for seven members and the two support staff to have two face-to-face meetings annually. The estimate assumes one meeting will be in Fairbanks and the other in a rural hub such as Bethel. While the council may meet by teleconference, in-person meetings are generally more productive and the preferred option.

Services include support for core service costs, communications, advertising, and other costs for research and reporting.

Commodities include one-time start up costs for cubicle, equipment, desk, chair, shelving, and on-going supplies.

First Alaskans Institute



Founding Board

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Inupiaq

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Byron I. Mallott
Tlingit

Morris Thompson
Athabaskan

Mission

Advance Alaska
Natives through
community engagement,
information and research,
collaboration, and
leadership development.



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February 15, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
State Capitol Room 508
Juneau AK 99501

Representative Alan Dick
State Capitol Room 104
Juneau AK 99801

Re: SB 130 & HB 254 Creating the Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council

Dear Senator Olson and Representative Dick,

On behalf of First Alaskans Institute, we extend a sincere thank you (**Unangam Tunuu: Qejaalakuŕ – thank you**) (*Inupiaq: quiaigipsi apai - I thank you very much*) to the sponsors and co-sponsors of SB 130 and HB 254 for your deep insight and commitment in moving the important topic of Alaska Native languages forward in this state; *it is critically needed.*

First Alaskans Institute is a statewide Alaska Native non-profit organization focused on advancing Alaska Natives for the next 10,000 years. We work to empower the indigenous peoples of this land to ensure that we are involved in, shaping, and making the decisions that impact our lives.

Revitalizing our Alaska Native languages is an important part of the restoration of healthy and well communities in Alaska – for all Alaskans. We ask all legislators to support this bill and vote in the affirmative to create the Alaska Native Language Preservation & Advisory Council. Some may ask why support Alaska Native languages when there are so many different languages from across the world spoken in Alaska? The answer is simple. All other world languages have a home, countries which speak them, nurture them, and grow their complexity and nuance over time but the only home the indigenous languages of Alaska have is right here.

Our languages contribute to the uniqueness of Alaska and the rich human diversity of this planet. Given an opportunity to blossom, they nourish and enrich lives, empower voices, grow cultural continuity, and strengthen identity. People who are strong in who they are and knowledgeable about their cultures are prepared for and work hard for individual and collective success.

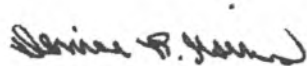
Most importantly, languages contain knowledge not available anywhere else in the world, especially in relationship to the land it has grown and developed on. If we, as Alaskans, are to steward Alaska and her resources into the future for her common good and for the benefit of all Alaskans, then the languages of Alaska Native peoples is crucial to this endeavor.

In reading through the most current version of the bills, we want to emphasize and acknowledge the importance of this legislations purpose of working to preserve and revitalize our endangered Alaska Native languages and to advise the Governor and the Legislature on how to do so. In order for this Council to be successful it will need resources to implement initial and on-going activities. We also strongly support and request the Governor and the appropriate appropriations committees to accordingly allocate the needed state resources.

Again, it is with excitement over the promise contained in this bill – that our languages are vital to our success and that of our children, and to the health of Alaska overall, that we request full Legislative support of SB 130 and HB 254.

My Board Chair or I would be happy to provide testimony in support of this vital legislation if the need arises so please do not hesitate to contact me.

lislilix,



Denise R. Morris (Unangan)
President/CEO

Quyanaq,



Willie "Iggiagruk" Hensley (Inupiaq)
Chair of the Board of Trustees



14 February 2012

The Honorable Bert Stedman, Co-Chair
The Honorable Lyman Hoffman, Co-Chair
Senate Finance Committee
State Capitol, Rm. 516 and 518
Juneau, AK 99801-1182

RE: SB 130, An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages

Dear Senators Stedman and Hoffman:

I appreciate this opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 130, "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the Preservation, Restoration, and Revitalization of Alaska Native languages." I would also like to commend you in this noble effort to support the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of this State.

I am Byron Mallott, a member of the Sealaska Corporation Board of Directors, and former President and CEO of First Alaskans Institute. My Tlingit names are Dux da neik and K'oo del ta'. I am the clan leader of the Kwáashkl Kwáan (Humpback Salmon) clan, Fort House from Dry Bay, near Yakutat.

Before I state my reasons for supporting SB 130, it is important to briefly outline the status of Alaska Native languages today. Unless remedial action is initiated, most all of Alaska Native languages will join their already extinct linguistic relative, the Eyak, within a few short decades. A UNESCO report on endangered languages classifies native languages as "vulnerable", definitely endangered, severely endangered, critically endangered and extinct. In our state, the Yup'ik language is the healthiest, yet is still "vulnerable", meaning children still speak the language but in limited domains (home). The Inupiaq language spoken in the North Slope and Kotzebue and the Gwich'in

Athabaskan languages are “severely endangered,” meaning that the languages are spoken by grandparents and older generations. While the parent generations may understand Inupiaq and Gwich’in Athabaskan, they do not generally speak these languages to children or among themselves. Aleut, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian languages are “critically endangered” meaning that the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently. This state has lost the Eyak language, which is now extinct.

The State of Alaska can stop this rapid progress towards language extinction by passing SB 130 “An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the Preservation, Restoration, and Revitalization of Alaska Native languages.” This is a historic and symbolic bill. For the first time, the highest office in our state is acknowledging the value of linguistic diversity. This is progress. We have moved from a time when our people had their mouths washed out with soap for speaking their language to a time when the Governor of our state will have an Advisory Council on Native Languages.

The Council won’t solve all of our problems. There is much work to do. That work must be in language restoration. Languages that are severely and critically endangered must teach and nurture language learners so that they can teach the language to others. Sealaska Heritage Institute recently surveyed language teachers/learners in Southeast communities. When asked how long they had been learning and how long they had been teaching, the difference was very little, sometimes only one semester. Our language learners/teachers need support at all levels. Native language curricula and Native Language teachers are critical for language revitalization.

The heart of the Council’s work will be to “advise the governor and the legislature on programs, policies, and projects for cost effective preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages in the state.” This work together with the necessary funding can ensure that one of our most significant resources in the state survives. The Council must formulate policies that support the revitalization of Native languages and identify barriers that threaten the survival of Native language. Significantly, one of the most immediate effects of the legislation is that it would serve to reverse the perception that the State of Alaska is adverse to linguistic diversity. It would further send a powerful message that Alaska sees indigenous languages as a part of its heritage to be protected.

Language is a uniquely human gift, central to our experience of being human and Alaska Native. Our cultural identity and traditional knowledge are embodied within our language. This knowledge and the differing world views are worthy of protection and transmittal to future generations. An example of worldview in the Tlingit language is kinship terms. In addition to terms for

mother, father and grandparent, Tlingit kinship terms denote clan relationships. Aunts and uncles are either the same clan as a child or the opposite clan—their titles tell him so. Siblings are differentiated by gender and age. Clans have clan in-laws—the opposite moiety who they traditionally married. All these very complex relationships are carried in kinship terms. Part of knowing who we are, which is critical for healthy development, is knowing who we are related to and how. All this is carried in language. Linguistic and cultural diversity is a benefit to society.

We are not going to save our indigenous languages through culture week, or guest lectures on language. Our state needs all of us to say this is a priority, advise the Governor and administration on systemic efforts that are most effective. Each of our language groups is working on language revitalization. Let's look at what is most effective for which groups. Even the Yup'ik, who have the healthiest of our Native languages, are vulnerable. A systemic approach will identify the needs of each language community and advise on what is needed to move that language one level safer.

Sincerely,

Byron Mallot
Sealaska Corporation
Board of Directors



23 January 2012

Honorable Donny Olson, Senator
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

It brings me gratification to see the introduction of Senate Bill 130 - Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council, "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration and revitalization of Alaska Native Languages."

I have been working in the field of language preservation and perpetuation for nearly 40 years and have seen first hand the extreme decline of the Iñupiaq language. A handful of our people have devoted their lives to teaching it in the hopes of reversing this loss. Much remains to be done.

I write in support of the bill and urge passage. Having an Advisory Council whose responsibility would be to advocate for Native languages across the state will go a long ways towards creating an atmosphere where we can realize a shift in language priorities in Alaska. It is high time the state recognize the importance of perpetuating the languages of its indigenous peoples.

Quyanaq.

Respectfully yours,

Jana Harcharek, Director
Iñupiaq Education

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON

Session

Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 508
Juneau, AK 99801
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Fax: (907) 465-4821

Interim

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Anchorage, AK 99501
(907) 269-0254
Fax: (907) 269-2031



Chair

Community & Regional Affairs

Member

Senate Finance Committee
Ethics Committee
Legislative Council
Northern Waters Task Force
Education Funding District Cost Factor
Health Care Commission
Finance Subcommittee Chair
Fish & Game
Health & Social Services
Public Safety
Finance Subcommittee Member
Environmental Conservation

Senator_Donny_Olson@legis.state.ak.us

Sponsor Statement: Senate Bill 130 Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council

"An Act establishing in the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages."

Alaska Native Languages (ANL's) are threatened by extinction. The intent of SB 130 is to preserve and maintain ANL's. Indigenous languages are the most critical components in terms of preservation of cultural ideas and traditions and serve as the backbone of all cultural elements.

SB 130 will establish the Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council to assess the state of ANL's and re-evaluate the programs within the state and make recommendation to the Governor and Legislature to establish new programs or re-organize the current programs.

According to the Alaska Native Language Center's *Population and Speaker Statistics* published in 2007, only 22 percent Alaska Natives statewide can speak their native language. More specifically, only 29 percent of the Eskimo Aleut population, less than 2 percent of the Tsimshian and Haida, and less than 5 percent of the Athabascan and Tlingit communities combined are fluent speakers. The Eyak language recently lost its last native fluent speaker.

It is vital that the State of Alaska creates this needed establishment and I urge your support in the passage of this bill.

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE

SENATOR DONALD C. OLSON



ALASKA
STATE CAPITOL
ROOM 514
JUNEAU, ALASKA 99801-1182

(907) 465-3707
FAX (907) 465-4821

Changes in CSSB 130 (STA)

- Section 1.
 - Added "are the foundation of cultures" to the legislative finding.
- Section 2.
 - Changed the name of the proposed council to Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council.
 - Establishment of the council in the DCCED instead of the Governor's Office.
 - The Council advises the Governor and the Legislature.
 - Council meets at least twice a year and prepares a report to the legislature by January 1 of each even numbered year.
 - The two non-voting legislative members of the council will come from the Bush Caucus.
- Section 3.
 - Governor must appoint by December 1, 2012
 - First report is due by July 1, 2014.

LEGISLATIVE RESEARCH REPORT

MARCH 24, 2011



REPORT NUMBER 11.219

ALASKA LEGISLATION REGARDING THE PRESERVATION OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

PREPARED FOR SENATOR DONALD OLSON

BY TIM SPENGLER, LEGISLATIVE ANALYST

You asked if legislation has been introduced in Alaska seeking to establish a board or advisory council to oversee programs designed to preserve Alaska Native languages. Briefly, we were unable to identify any such current or past legislative efforts in Alaska.¹ We did find, however, two examples of related legislation that may interest you, which we discuss below.

In 1972 the Alaska Legislature enacted CH 175 SLA 1972, which established the Alaska Native Language Center (ANLC) based at the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF).² The mission of the ANLC is to serve as a center for research and documentation of the Native languages of Alaska. The Center publishes its research in story collections, dictionaries, and research papers. It also houses a large archival collection of items written in or about Alaska Native languages. Staff members provide materials for bilingual teachers and others who work with Native languages and provide consulting and training to teachers, school districts, and state agencies.

Professor Lawrence Kaplan, director of the ANLC, was unaware of any legislative attempts to form a board or council to oversee programs designed to preserve Alaska Native languages.³ He also polled his co-workers at the Center who were also unaware of such efforts. Additionally, we spoke with the founder and first director of the ANLC, Professor Michael Krauss.⁴ Professor Krauss, a Harvard-trained linguist who taught at UAF from 1960-2000, informs us that no such legislative efforts have been put forward to his

¹ In an attempt to identify proposed legislation we reviewed the Bill Action Status and Inquiry Systems (for legislative activity from 1993 to the present), the Alaska Final Status of Bills and Resolutions books (for information from 1977-1992), and the Legislative Reporting Service reports (for information from 1960-1976). Additionally, we completed a Newsbank search and spoke to Alaska Native language experts. Despite our efforts, it is possible that relevant proposals of legislation have eluded us.

² More information on the Alaska Native Language Center is available at <http://www.uaf.edu/onlc>.

³ Professor Kaplan can be reached at (907) 474-6582.

⁴ Professor Krauss can be reached at (907) 479-6340.

knowledge.⁵ He asserted that if such measures had been considered, he would almost certainly have been aware of them.

Additionally, Senate Bill 103, which addressed Native languages in schools, was passed into law in 2000 (CH 29 SLA 2000, codified as AS 14.30.420).⁶ This measure mandates that school districts in which a majority of students are Alaska Natives shall establish a local Native language curriculum advisory board. If an advisory board recommends the establishment of a Native language curriculum, the school board in that district may initiate and conduct such a curriculum.

We hope you find this information to be useful. Please let us know if you have questions or need additional information.

⁵ The idea of a board or advisory council to oversee programs to preserve Alaska Native languages intrigued the professor. He related that he would be very happy to consult with anyone considering such a measure.

⁶ The version of Senate Bill 103 that passed the legislature was House CS for Senate Bill 103 (HES).

MEAD TREADWELL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
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STATE OF ALASKA
OFFICE OF THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR
ANCHORAGE

MEMORANDUM

TO: Lieutenant Governor Mead Treadwell

FROM: Esther Woo

Cc:

DATE: August 15, 2011

RE: **Cursory Survey of Language Preservation and Revitalization Efforts in Alaska**

At your request, and as a background for the State Committee on Research, the Alaska Historical Commission, and the U.S. Arctic Research Commission, this memo is a report on our office's efforts to identify examples of language revitalization and preservation activities taking place in Alaska.

Executive Summary

Half of the world's languages are not being taught to children, meaning that 3,500 of the 7,000 languages are set to disappear within a generation. Specifically in the United States, only 201 of the 400 indigenous languages were being spoken in the year 2006; it is predicted that only 20 will be spoken in year 2050. In the state of Alaska, where there are 20 indigenous languages, one is already extinct, meaning there are no remaining native speakers. The remaining 19 are considered endangered.

In this light, this memo will provide a cursory view on why this issue deserves attention as well as action as well as examples of different efforts targeting education and documentation. It will also provide an overview of government related efforts assisting these activities. Finally, there will be several recommendations regarding actions the commissions may take to further support existing efforts.

The Importance of Preservation

Losing a language not only deprives the world of the language itself, but also the richness of culture, history, and knowledge carried within the language. As Wade Davis¹ says, "Language is a flash of the human spirit. It's a vehicle through which the soul of each particular culture comes into a material world. Every language is an old-grown forest of the mind, a watershed of thoughts, an ecosystem of possibilities."

Language loss is an indicator of cultural loss because according to Linda Belarde,² Curriculum Specialist in the Sealaska Heritage Institute, "Language carries a people's way of looking at the world." For example, the terms for "nephew" and "niece" in Tlingit are "kaalk'w," her brother's child, and "keik," his sister's child. This means that his sister's child is in the same clan while her brother's child is in the opposite moiety, indicating that it is the clan of the kin, and not his or her gender (as it is in English), that is taken in account. These Tlingit kinship terms thus serve to reflect the matriarchal structure of Tlingit society.

Native languages also carry scientific knowledge. For instance, some native terms complement knowledge on walrus anatomy and snowflakes. Furthermore, the extinction of a language will also bury history and cultural tradition, because many of these indigenous languages have been passed down orally for centuries. Despite existing writing systems for all Alaskan indigenous languages today, significant loss of such knowledge would be inevitable in the face of language loss. Thus, in the words of Davis, "We're living through a time when half of humanity's intellectual, social, and spiritual legacy is being lost."

Revitalization through Education

It is thus clear that subsequent generations will to some degree face irreparable gaps in culture and knowledge. However, there have been efforts across the state of Alaska, with the support of government related agencies as well as state and federal legislation, to reverse the trend of such loss. At the heart of these efforts is the education of the young, a vital approach in passing down language to the next generation.

One successful model of language education is the Ayaprun Elitnaurvik Yup'ik Immersion School in the Lower Kuskokwim School District. The immersion school is a K-6 charter school located in Bethel, with around 175 students each year. Efforts to implement an immersion program began in the 1980s when concerned parents petitioned for a stronger and more extensive Yup'ik program. Today, the school's mission statement is to provide a high quality education to meet the state standards and strengthen Yup'ik language and culture, while promoting an

¹ Wade Davis is an anthropologist, ethnobotanist, author, and photographer who has been researching and exploring worldwide indigenous cultures. Davis is an advocate for the protection of the "ethnosphere," a term he coined that describes the sphere of all of humanity's cultures and beliefs. His books *Light at the Edge of the World: A Journey Through the Realm of Vanishing Cultures* (2001) and *The Wayfinders: Why Ancient Wisdom Matters in the Modern World* (2009) focus on such issues. Davis is an Explore-in-Residence at the National Geographic Society.

²Linda Belarde, Curriculum Specialist at the Sealaska Heritage Center: (907)586-9187

The Alaska Native Language Program offers major and minor degrees in Central Yup'ik and Inupiaq Eskimo. The classes are taught by members of the Alaska Native Language Center staff, who are working to further develop the bachelor's degree program by implementing more Yup'ik literature. The UAF also runs a teacher training program as a partnership with the Kuskokwim campus of UAF in Bethel. In 2010, the program graduated its first cohort of Alaska native teachers with a specialization in second language acquisition and teacher education: there were 15 graduates with master's degrees and 3 graduates with doctorate's degrees. This teacher training program is closely linked to the UAF's partnerships with school districts; according to Patrick Marlow,⁶ Associate Professor at the University, most of the training programs' graduates are now working as teachers or administrators in districts such as the Lower Kuskokwim school district, where teachers continue to go through training to learn good teaching methods as well as language learning instructional methods. Furthermore, several teachers in Bethel are partnering with the university to develop curriculum. The UAF is thus a vital source of human resources for language education programs.

Another challenge to revitalization is the loss of a natural language environment caused by rapidly decreasing speaker populations. The Sealaska Heritage Institute, which was founded for the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people of Southeast Alaska and in 1997 adopted language preservation as its foremost priority, strives to create language environments to support effective learning by designing units for language curriculum, providing educational tools, and hosting workshops for teachers. One example of the institute's educational resources is the recently introduced set of flash cards and audio CDs to complement Tlingit alphabet learning. Public school teachers throughout the region as well as community programs such as afterschool or summer school programs make use of the resources provided by the institute. The Sealaska Heritage Institute also has partnerships with the Juneau School District and the Hoonah School District.

The Sealaska Heritage Institute's biennial Celebration further encourages this language environment, as all of the songs in the Celebration dances are in native languages. Depending on the year, the Celebration includes lectures and lessons in the language. In conjunction with providing these resources and opportunity for educators and the community, the institute has programs such as the Latseen Hoops Camps, an annual summer camp with an all-Tlingit coaching staff that exposes Tlingit to students by integrating native language instruction with basketball.⁷

The Goldbelt Heritage Foundation, formed in 2007, is also dedicated to offering tools and materials for people wishing to learn the language. For example, Fred White, Tlingit Language Specialist and also the youngest fluent speaker of Tlingit, has made audio recordings for teachers throughout the region. In addition, the foundation is developing a Tlingit verb database that

⁶ Patrick Marlow, Associate Professor at UAF: (907)474-7446

⁷ For more information on SHI efforts contact Linda Belarde mentioned in footnote two.

includes conjugations, a project originally started by Richard and Nora Marks Dauenhauer in the 1990s and now headed by Keri Edwards.⁸

Furthermore, the Bilingual Multicultural Education Equity Conference (BMEEC) is an annual conference supported by the Alaska Department of Education and the Alaska Association for Bilingual Education. Agendas for the conference include workshops and discussions on the topic of multicultural education. The keynote speakers in 2011 (Misty Adoniou and Mary Macken-Horarik) presented foundations for an approach to teaching literacy.

Preservation through Documentation

Besides efforts centered on education, there are numerous groups across the state working to document native languages. Three examples of such efforts are from the Alaska Native Language Center of UAF, Sealaska Heritage Institute, and the Alutiiq Museum.

The archive in the University is the largest repository of Native American languages and related languages in the world: it houses more than 10,000 items of written documents that include copies or originals of all material in or about all of Alaska's native languages, which in many cases are held nowhere else. In addition to these collections, there are collections of related languages such as the Eskimo languages of Russia and the Athabascan languages of Canada. The archive also houses a recording collection of about 7,000 recordings, although Gary Holton,⁹ Professor of Linguistics at the University, calls this "the tip of the iceberg." To extend this audio collection, the language center has formed partnerships with regional organizations, such as the Alutiiq Museum and the Ahtna Heritage Foundation. The foundation does the outreach in the community to locate tapes to preserve and digitize, while the language center archive provides infrastructure backup. In addition to the archive, the language center staff document native languages and provide resources. For instance, Lawrence Kaplan, Professor of Linguistics at the University and Director of the Alaska Native Language Center, is working on dictionaries of the Inupiaq language as well as texts and grammatical explanations for the language. Holton has led a project developing a new edition of the Indigenous Peoples and Languages of Alaska Map originally produced by Michael Krauss in 1974.

The Sealaska Heritage Institute has also published books and videos relating to cultures, languages, and history, including language dictionaries, phrase books, and Tlingit narratives. The institute also strives to document the history, culture, heritage, art, and language of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian people of the Northwest Coast by housing a collection of books, historical photographs, audiovisual recordings, manuscript materials, and ethnographic objects.

The Alutiiq Museum has the Qik'rtarmiut Alutiit (Alutiiq People of the Island) language program that focuses on documenting and revitalizing the Alutiiq Language of the Kodiak Archipelago. The Alutiiq Living Words Project, funded by the National Science Foundation's Documenting Endangered Languages Program, involves semi-fluent speakers and elders who worked together

⁸ For more information on the Goldbelt Heritage Foundation contact Fred White or Keri Edwards: (907)790-1424

⁹ Gary Holton, Professor of Linguists at UAF: (907)474-6585

to document Alutiiq speech, vocabulary, and cultural traditions in audio and video form, which were indexed and archived. Selected recordings are made available online through the Alutiiq Language Web Portal. The project also involves the New Words Council, which consists of elders and semi-fluent associate members who develop native words for contemporary terms such as "computer," "elevator," and "linguist." Besides these documentation efforts, the Alutiiq Museum's Alutiiq Word of the Week program, now in its fourteenth year, produces weekly cultural lessons for weekly broadcast on the radio, the Kodiak Daily Mirror, and email broadcast. The Alutiiq Museum hosts the Alutiiq Language Club, which meets weekly to talk in the language or have elders tell stories in the language.¹⁰

Supporting Organizations

In addition to language education programs, efforts to provide human resources and education resources, and documentation works, there are also supporting organizations which are not necessarily directly involved in language revitalization and preservation, but are vital to the state-wide effort as a whole. Such supporting groups include the Alaska Native Heritage Center and the Alaska Humanities Forum.

The Alaska Native Heritage Center, which focuses on expanding the public's knowledge of Alaska Native cultures, has been directly and indirectly involved in Dena'ina language preservation and revitalization. The ANHC is currently closing out a National Science Foundation grant for a project involving a partnership with a tribe to research rites of passage through studying and transcribing traditional stories. Though the ANHC currently does not offer language classes as it did in the past, the heritage center provides language lesson podcasts for online use as well as internship programs and afterschool programs designed to expose students to language environments through native dance and song. Annette Evans Smith,¹¹ Interim President and CEO of the Alaska Native Heritage Center, envisions partnering with some of the regions that have immersion programs to create a language nest, such as a camp for young children that would fuse childcare and language immersion: "Immersion is the best way to learn a language," says Evans Smith.

The Alaska Humanities Forum acts as a convener and supporter of other groups, mainly through awarding grants as part of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Recipients of these grants include the Alaska Native Knowledge Network, which is working to preserve and promote native language and philosophy, as well as a program for preserving Eyak. A native language preservation program that has worked with representatives from villages in the Kotzebue area and been headed by Tom Okleasik also received funding. The AHF has supported the Rosetta Stone Endangered Language Program, which in partnership with the NANA Regional Corporation designed two Inupiaq language CDs. has designed a program for learning Inupiaq. Greg Kimura,¹² CEO and President of the Alaska Humanities Forum, commented that there are

¹⁰ For more information on the language program in the Alutiiq Museum contact April Counciller, Language Manager at the Alutiiq Museum and Archaeological Repository: (907)486-7004

¹¹ Annette Evans Smith, Interim CEO and President of the Alaska Native Heritage Center: (907)330-8059.

¹² Greg Kimura, CEO and President of the Alaska Humanities Forum: (907)272-5308.

not enough resources to cover the needs of various groups. However, he expressed that the Forum “wants to be around to be supportive and helpful of the different groups around the state who are part of preservation and revitalization efforts.”

Government-related Support

Assisting these many layers of efforts are federal agencies; the National Science Foundation, the Administration for Native Americans,¹³ the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Endowment for the Humanities have provided funding for many of these efforts. The U.S. Department of Education in particular, in the words of Patrick Marlow, “has been absolutely fantastic in terms of its commitment to teacher training.” The U.S. Department of Education’s Office of English Language Acquisition provides funding for professional development for K-12 teachers, and the Office of Alaska Native Education provides grants for Alaskan efforts that focus on developing strong language programs for K-12. According to Marlow, both of these offices have been vital to establishing and maintaining teacher education programs in the University. Despite this, April Counciller of the Alutiiq Museum and Marlow both expressed concern for the growing difficulty in not only receiving grants but also maintaining funding for established programs.

In addition, both the federal and state governments have introduced legislations that may assist revitalization efforts. The Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 was passed by Congress and signed by President Bush as an amendment to the Native American Programs Act of 1974. The amendment strengthened the act by providing for the revitalization of Native American languages through immersion programs. In Alaska, Senator Donald Olson has introduced Senate Bill 130, which recognizes native language preservation as “vital in maintaining traditional knowledge and understanding” and calls for the establishment of the Alaska Native Language Preservation Council in the Office of the Governor “for the purpose of recommending the establishment or reorganization of programs to support the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages.”¹⁴

Furthermore, an Executive Order on Native American Language Preservation¹⁵ was drafted in 2010 between senior White House Staff and representatives from Native American communities across the United States. If approved by the President of the United States, this Executive Order would strengthen the Native American Languages Act of 1974 and the Esther Martinez Native American Languages Preservation Act of 2006 mentioned above by creating an Interagency Working Group on Native American Language Revitalization, mobilizing the coordination of federal resources for language revitalization, and appointing a Presidential Board of Advisers on Native American Languages. According to Gary Holton, “It would be recognition that this is something we believe in, that we make a commitment... If you go back to people who have had

¹³ Federal agency established through the Native American Programs Act of 1974.

¹⁴ Link to text of Senate Bill No. 130: <http://www.scribd.com/doc/53125928/SB-130-SB0130A-The-Alaska-State-Legislature-via-MvGov365-com>.

¹⁵ Link to Executive Order on Native American Language Preservation: <http://www.lsadc.org/info/documents/2011/resolutions/executive-order-draft.pdf>.

decades of language suppression, that means something." As of July 2011, the National Congress of the American Indian as well as other language rights and American Indian rights groups are pressuring President Obama to sign this order.

Recommendations for the Commissions

There are several ways in which the commissions you participate in as Lt. Governor may assist the statewide revitalization and preservation effort. First, the Alaska State Historical Commission can support efforts to officially recognize the natives by establishing native place names. In Hawaii for example, Hawaiian can be seen in signs in the airports and on the streets. According to Holton, this has the effect of increasing appreciation for native languages among both natives and non-natives. Representatives from the Alaska State Historical Commission attending the Council of Geographic Names Authority in October should identify other ways to establish more Alaska Native place names.

Second, there is a lack of coordination of all revitalization and preservation efforts on a state level. Although the Alaska Native Language Center advises new groups starting revitalization projects and provides information about existing efforts, there may be a need for a higher level of coordination. One problem with the lack of such coordination is that it is difficult to get a broad picture of efforts across the state, which causes another problem: according to Holton, "What we see across the state are grass root projects that are reinventing the wheel," which results in wasted time, resources, and effort. In addition, a higher level of coordination may allow native language revitalization efforts a higher level of recognition. The Alaska State Historical Commission may consider either asking Governor Parnell to establish a state-level coordination of language revitalization and preservation efforts, or offer to take on that responsibility under existing mandates of the Commission.

Third, students attending immersion or bilingual schools may need alternative testing to required standardized tests in English. In cases where students are in academic settings involving two languages, this requirement may drive parents, afraid that their children will perform badly on the test, to pull back on the language programs in place. School districts such as the Lower Kuskokwim district has requested a waiver and offered alternative tests in Yup'ik, but the state, in turn, has not requested such a waiver although it has the option to do so.¹⁶ According to Marlow, research has indicated that these students may at first lag behind in terms of academic achievement, but later tend to catch up to, if not surpass, monolingual students. Therefore it is recommended that the Alaska State Historical Commission work with the Department of Education to assist efforts to provide alternative assessments within immersion or bilingual programs in order for such programs to maintain and strengthen support of multicultural education among parents and community members.

Fourth, as emphasized by Linda Belarde of the Sealaska Institute, in many regions there is no natural language learning environment, rendering language learners to become dependent on structured classroom settings, which according to Belarde, "makes it very different from learning

¹⁶ For more information on the waiver contact Patrick Marlow mentioned above in footnote six

our languages naturally as our first languages." Furthermore, it is important to for native languages to appeal to young people: as Kaplan comments, "One of the worst things that could happen is for people to see these as languages of old people." To prevent this, Kaplan is working on a grant proposal for a project that would document and encourage text messaging in native languages. Thus, it is recommended that in order to assist efforts in creating a more effective language environment such as those of the Sealaska Heritage Institute and the Alutiiq Museum, the commission support efforts to increase native language use through the media, such as in music, television shows, movies, and radio.

Lastly, the commission should work with the State Committee on Research and the U.S. Arctic Research Commission to support further research on successful language revitalization models and current needs in language education, as educating the next generations may be the most effective way to ensure the survival of Alaska's indigenous languages. There have been successful language revitalization efforts in New Zealand and Hawaii that may be referred to as models for future efforts in Alaska. In New Zealand, where in the 1980s fewer than 20% of the Maori were considered native speakers, the Kohanga reo movement was founded in 1982. Primary schools and secondary schools were established, where students were primarily taught in the Maori language. Furthermore, Hawaii adopted this model through the Punana Leo (translated as "language nest"), which are essentially Hawaiian immersion. Later, K-12 Hawaiian immersion programs as well as higher level education programs were developed. These models have already inspired Alaskans, such as trustees of the Sealaska Heritage Institute, who after visiting Hawaii and learning about its language restoration programs, decided to adopt language revitalization as the foremost priority of the institute.

In this light, one possible area of research may be regarding human resource deficiencies, an issue that the Alaska Native Language Center has been addressing. A possible way to support such efforts may be to strengthen cooperation between Greenland and Alaska through native language teacher exchanges: some natives in Greenland and some natives in Alaska share common languages such as Inupiaq with differences in dialect. Because the problem in many villages is that native speakers are too elderly to teach younger children, an exchange where teachers from Greenland could work in villages and language programs would not only bolster current language education efforts, but also establish a connection between the Greenlandic and Alaskan language revitalization efforts.¹⁷

Success through Community Involvement

Ultimately, it is most important to emphasize that the primary efforts must come from the community: "We're the support staff; they call us up and we do our best to help by producing materials and documenting the languages, but as far as the real spark to get people learning and revitalizing the language, I'd say that has to come from within the community. You can't make somebody do that," says Kaplan. Greg Kimura likewise stressed, "One thing is absolutely clear: that we are not going to be able to accomplish the preservation, let alone the propagation of some

¹⁷ The idea of the Greenland-Alaska teacher exchange idea was communicated between the office of Lt. Governor Treadwell and between Lt. Governor Treadwell and

of these threatened languages unless that whole effort is led by the communities; they're the ones who have to be the primary morale force for this, and also the voice for language preservation."

Alaska Native Language Center



Alaska Native Languages

Population and Speaker Statistics

The following table gives estimates of the population of speakers of Alaska Native languages in reference to the relevant community population. Numbers such as these should be interpreted with caution. As Krauss notes:

Arriving at statistics of number of speakers of indigenous languages out of total relevant population is complicated by two types of major factors. The first type is of course in the determination of who is a speaker, and the second is in counting who is a member of the indigenous community. (2007:409)

More relevant to those wishing to understand the status of Alaska Native languages are the current and recent efforts at language documentation and revitalization.

Language Family	Language Name	Population	Speakers
Eskimo-Aleut	Aleut	2,300	150
	(*Russia)	200	5
	Sugplaq (Alutliq)	3,500	200
	Central Yup'ik	25,000	10,400
	Siberian Yupik	1,400	1,000
	(*Russia)	900	300
	Inuplaq (Inuit)	15,700	2,144
	(*Canada)	30,500	24,500
Tsimshianic	(Greenland)	47,000	47,000
	Coast Tsimshian	1,400	30
	(Canada)	3,200	<400
	Nisga-Gitksan	<100	0?
Haida	(Canada)	5,400	<1,000
	Northern Haida	650	10

	(Canada)	1,100	30
	Tlingit	10,000	300
	(Canada)	1,000	75
	Eyak		0
	Ahtna	650	25
	Dena'ina	1,000	50
	Deg Xinag	250	14
	Hollkachuk	180	5
Athabaskan- Eyak- Tlingit	Koyukon	2,300	150
	Upper Kuskokwim	100	25
	(Lower) Tanana	400	25
	Tanacross	200	50
	Upper Tanana	300	55
	Han	60	12
	(Canada)	250	7
	Gwich'in	1,000	150
	(Canada)	1,900	400

Source: Krauss, Michael E. 2007. Native languages of Alaska. In: *The Vanishing Voices of the Pacific Rim*, ed. by Osahito Miyaoko, Osamu Sakiyama, and Michael E. Krauss. Oxford: Oxford University Press. (Table 21.1, page 408)

*The non-Alaskan numbers in the table come from the earlier work of [Krauss 1997](#).

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tel. (907) 474-7874

For questions or comments regarding this website, contact fyani@uaf.edu



Yukon Koyukuk School District
Administrative & Support Offices
4762 Old Airport Way
Fairbanks, Alaska 99709

Kerry Boyd
Superintendent
kboyd@yksd.com

Telephone: (907) 374-9400
Fax: (907) 374-9440

January 23, 2012

Dear Alaska State Senators,

On behalf of the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, I am writing in support of Senate Bill 130 (YKSD). YKSD serves nine Interior Alaskan villages plus Raven Correspondence School. Three Native languages are spoken in our region: Denaakk'a (Lower Tanana Athabascan); Denaakk'e (Koyukon Athabascan) and Inupiaq.

SB 130 will establish the Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council. The council will assess the state of Alaska Native Languages and will re-evaluate the programs within the state to make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

In Yukon Koyukuk School District there are less than 100 fluent speakers, with the majority of them over the age of seventy. The YKSD Board of Education requires thirty minutes of Native language instruction for students in grades kindergarten to fourth grade. In some schools, all students receive Native language instruction. Classes are taught on site and over two-way video-conference. The students are learning to speak, read and write and learn about their culture through the language. The instruction increases their self-esteem and enjoyment of school.

It is vital that the State of Alaska creates this needed establishment and I respectfully request your support in the passage of this bill.

Sincerely,

Kerry Boyd,
Superintendent

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Last native Eyak speaker dead at 89

By DEBRA MCKINNEY
dmckinney@adn.com

Published: January 22nd, 2008 02:51 PM
Last Modified: January 22nd, 2008 12:47 PM

Chief Marie Smith Jones, 89, the last full-blooded Eyak and last native speaker of the Eyak language, died of natural causes on Monday at her home in Anchorage, according to her family.



enlarge
Marc Lester / Anchorage Daily News / Anchorage Daily News

In 2001 Eyak elder Marie Smith Jones was honored at the Chickaloon powwow.

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Video: Chief Marie Smith Jones delivers a prayer in Eyak in 1994.

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Services will begin at 1 p.m. Friday at St. Innocent Russian Orthodox Cathedral, 401 Turpin St. Viewing will begin at 11 a.m.

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4 of 16





ALASKA FEDERATION
OF NATIVES

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES
AFN LEGISLATIVE/LITIGATION COMMITTEE

2012 RESOLUTION

RESOLUTION 12-01

TITLE: SUPPORT OF A STATE OF ALASKA ACT TO ESTABLISH THE ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE PRESERVATION AND ADVISORY COUNCIL AND RELATING TO THE PRESERVATION, RESTORATION AND REVITALIZATION OF ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGES

WHEREAS: Alaska Native Languages have been spoken for thousands of years; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native Languages represent a significant resource of the State of Alaska and have contributed to its vitality and diversity; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native Languages are threatened by extinction; and

WHEREAS: the foundation of Alaska Native cultures and ancient traditional knowledge are embedded in Alaska Native languages; and

WHEREAS: knowledge of Alaska Natives languages promotes positive self-identity of Alaska Natives; and

WHEREAS: studies have demonstrated that the academic performance of Alaska Native students improve when Alaska Native students are taught their Native language and culture; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native corporations, organizations, and tribes and educational entities throughout the State of Alaska are attempting to restore and teach Alaska Native Languages; and

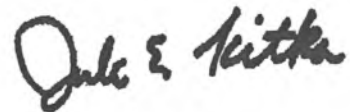
WHEREAS: the Legislature of the State of Alaska is proposing through the proposed Senate Bill 130 to establish an Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED the Alaska Federation of Natives conveys its support of Senate Bill No. 130 and urges the Alaska State Legislature and the Governor of Alaska to enact and sign into law the referenced Act.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Alaska Native Federal of Natives further urges the Alaska State Legislature and Governor of Alaska to support the allocation of funds to support Alaska Native Language restoration programs.

PASSED THIS 23RD DAY

OF JANUARY 23, 2012



Julie E. Kitka
President



ALASKA FEDERATION
OF NATIVES

January 23, 2012

The Honorable Don Olson
Alaska State Capitol, Room 508
Alaska State Senate
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

As you know, the Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska representing more than 125,000 Alaska Natives residing in Alaska, and more than 120,000 Alaska Natives scattered throughout the other 49 states. AFN was organized in 1966 to facilitate bringing the various regional and village associations together in order to advocate with one voice for a fair settlement of our aboriginal land claims, which became the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA).

Today, AFN is governed by a 37-member board of directors representing villages (both federally recognized tribes and ANCSA village corporations), 11 regional tribal consortiums, and the 13 regional ANCSA corporations. AFN's annual convention is the largest annual gathering of Native people within the United States. AFN's mission is, in part, to enhance and promote the cultural, economic and political voice of the Alaska Native community.

AFN supports the enactment of Senate Bill 130, entitled "An Act establishing in the Office of the Governor an advisory council for the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages" and we join you in urging support for passage of this bill.

This bill establishes, in the Office of the Governor, an Alaska Native Language Preservation Council (Council) tasked with evaluating Alaska Native Language programs and making recommendations to establish new programs or reorganize current programs. We agree that indigenous languages are the most critical components in preservation of Alaska Native Cultures as they are the foundation of all cultural groups, including the Alaska Natives. Their preservations will preserve cultural ideas and traditions and serve as the backbone of all cultural elements. We also recognize the urgency of establishing such a Council as many Alaska Native Languages are threatened by extinction.

Attached is AFN Resolution 12-01, "Support of a State of Alaska Act To Establish The Alaska Native Language Preservation Council And Relating To The Preservation, Restoration and Revitalization of Alaska Native Languages." This resolution urges support of Senate Bill 130 and requests immediate action begin, by way of demonstration projects, to restore Alaska Native Languages. We believe inclusion of five language restoration demonstration projects will

strengthen the bill as it moves the issue beyond analysis and to a point where positive progress can be made.

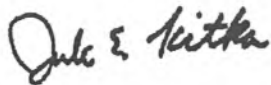
I am also attaching a copy of a document entitled "Sealaska Heritage Institute Alaska Native Language Programs January 2012." The first sentence of this document states: "Alaska Natives are comprised of seven linguistic groups including the Inupiat, Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian. Each has or had its own indigenous language." This document describes the efforts of the Alaska Native Community from Barrow to Metlakatla on preserving the indigenous languages that exist in these regions. Their efforts will lead to the preservation of the foundations of the cultures that exist across the State of Alaska.

On behalf of the Alaska Federation of Natives, we urge passage of Senate Bill 130 with additional language adding five language restoration demonstration projects for the Inupiat, Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan and Tlingit language groups.

Thank you for your continued preservation of the Alaska Native cultures during your times as a member of the Alaska State Senate.

Thank you for your consideration. If you have questions regarding this letter, please call me at AFN at 907-274-3611.

Sincerely,



Julie Kitka
President

Attachment: AFN Resolution 12-01, "Support of a State of Alaska Act To Establish The Alaska Native Language Preservation Council And Relating To The Preservation, Restoration and Revitalization of Alaska Native Languages"
Sealaska Heritage Institute: Alaska Native Language Programs, January 2012

Cc: The Honorable Lyman Hoffman
The Honorable Bob Herron
The Honorable Neal Foster
The Honorable Sean Parnell

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January 23, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
State Capitol Building
Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Re: Support of SB 130, Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

Dear Senator Olson:

The Eyak Corporation greatly appreciates your introduction of SB 130 to establish an Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council. We strongly support the bill and encourage the Alaska State Legislature to adopt it this year.

In January 2008, after the passing of the last fluent speaker in the Eyak language, Chief Marie Smith Jones, the language was thought to be extinct. However, a number of shareholders of The Eyak Corporation, including descendants of Ms. Smith Jones, are of Eyak descent and have begun learning the language of their ancestors. In 2011, immersion clinics were held to teach the Eyak language in Cordova and Anchorage. Those clinics proved, beyond the slightest doubt, that Eyaks are fighting valiantly to keep their language alive.

Please let us know how we can support your efforts in furtherance of SB 130. We look forward to our Eyak shareholders and descendants expressing their appreciation to you, in Eyak.

Sincerely,

The Eyak Corporation


Nancy C. Barnes
President



*Alaska Association for Bilingual Education
An Affiliate of TESOL and NABE*

EXECUTIVE BOARD

Annie Conger
President

Philip Farson
Past-President

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Karen Waters,
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Elder

**SPECIAL INTEREST
GROUPS**

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Student Advocacy

Fanny Parker
English-As-a-Second-
Language

Tim Argetsinger
AK Native Language and
Culture Retention

Robert Charlie
Adult Higher Education

Moses Dirks
Linguistics and Research

**REGIONAL
REPRESENTATIVES**

Pribilof/Aleutians

Beverly Hugo
North Slope

Northwest

Rachel Panamarioff
Southcentral

Susan Paskvan
Interior

Paul A Paul
Western

Halfa Sadighi
Southeast

Urban
Maureen Cronin-
WmsComelius
Anchorage
Fairbanks

Dear Alaska State Senators,

I am writing in support of Senate Bill 130 on behalf of the Alaska Association for Bilingual Education Alaska Native Language and Culture Retention Special Interest Group. The Alaska Native Language and Culture Retention Special Interest Group (ANLCR SIG) is comprised of a cross section of volunteer Native language educators, advocates, and activists working to protect, promote, and revitalize Native languages. As the only statewide Native language advocacy body, the ANLCR SIG carries out this work through conferencing and workshops, networking best practices, and advocating for institutional and governmental support for Native language revitalization initiatives. As a volunteer body our resources and ability to be effective are strained, however, which is why in 2010 the ANLCR SIG sought the creation of a statewide Alaska Native Languages Commission through Alaska Federation of Natives Resolution 10-34. It is for this reason that the ANLCR SIG enthusiastically supports SB 130.

SB 130 will help provide the political advocacy, human and financial resources Alaska Native language advocates, activists, and educators need to craft policies and projects that will contribute to the protection, promotion, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages. Such support is urgently needed at a time when all 19 indigenous languages still spoken in Alaska are endangered or critically endangered. The passing in 2008 of Marie Smith Jones, the last fluent speaker of Eyak, underscores the vulnerability of Alaska Native languages and the urgency with which we must undertake this vital work.

Native languages and the rich cultures they make possible constitute an invaluable contribution to the diversity and richness of our State, and are together an essential component of Alaska's identity. Indeed, there is nothing more Alaskan than Alaska Native languages, and future generations of Alaskans deserve the opportunity to experience and speak them.

Sincerely,

Timothy Aqukkasuk Argetsinger
Chair, AK Native Language and Culture Retention SIG



Tara Sweeney
Senior Vice President of External Affairs
Arctic Slope Regional Corporation
3900 C Street, Suite 801
Anchorage, AK 99503

January 27, 2012

Senator Donald C. Olson
State Capitol, Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Dear Senator Olson,

I congratulate you on your continued effort to preserve and restore the many indigenous languages in our great state, and stand behind your push to create the Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council.

As an Iñupiat Eskimo who grew up in Barrow, and later spent time in Noorvik, Unalakleet and Bethel, I've seen first-hand how Alaska Native languages can link a community to its culture and traditions, as well as help to bridge the gap between generations. The passage of Senate Bill 130 would help to ensure that these languages in Alaska would not only thrive, but also serve as a guide for future Alaskans.

I look forward to the passage of this important piece of legislation, and will monitor its progress throughout this legislative session.

Sincerely,
ARCTIC SLOPE REGIONAL CORPORATION

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tara Sweeney', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Tara Sweeney

cc: Jana Harcharek, North Slope Borough School District



January 20, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
State Capitol Building
Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801

RE: Support of SB 130, Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

Dear Senator Olson:

In the majestic forests of Southeast Alaska, along the coastlines of *Haa Aani* (Our Land), our people have gathered in the clan houses and told our stories for thousands of years, passing down the wisdom of Elders and the richness of our culture for generations. This oral history stood unbroken for centuries, but now the languages of the Alaska Native people face extinction. It is imperative that these languages be preserved and with them, the foundation of Alaska Native cultures and ancient traditional knowledge.

Sealaska Corporation offers its overwhelming support of SB 130, An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages. Sealaska urges the Alaska State Legislature and Governor of Alaska to also champion an allocation of funds to programs that restore Alaska Native Languages.

We can all be part of a solution to address the many challenges facing Alaska Natives. Native youth have been shown to improve academic performance when taught in their Native tongue; healthy self-esteem has been linked to a strong sense of identity; and thriving communities are built on the foundation of strong family relationships and lines of communication.

Please share this letter of support to any extent that it might encourage others to vote for the passage of SB 130, and secure funding for programs to restore the words of our ancestors.

Sincerely,

Albert M. Kookesh

Albert Kookesh, Board Chair
SEALASKA CORPORATION



Alaska Native Education Association
c/o B. Y. Alvanna-Stimpfle
P.O. Box 729
Nome, Alaska 99762
<http://aneasonline.org/>

The mission of ANEA is to enhance, promote, and advocate for all Alaska Native cultures, values, languages, and traditions in the educational entities throughout Alaska.

**ANEA BOARD
MEMBERS, BY
REGION**

January 25, 2012

**AT-LARGE
BERNADETTE
YAAYUK ALVANNA-
STIMPFLER
CO-CHAIR, Interim**

Senator Donny Olson
State Capitol Bldg. Rm. 508
Juneau, AK. 99801

Dear Senator Olson,

**INTERIOR
MARY WALKER
CO-CHAIR, Interim**

The Alaska Native Educators Association (ANEA) Board is in favor of the SB 130. The ANEA Board was formed to provide a means to discuss issues facing Alaska Native students and is comprised of lifelong educators, representing most regions in Alaska. At the present time the Aleutian and Southeast region board seats are open and will be filled at our annual conference. Having no funding as an organization, we have had to piggyback with other conferences, specifically the Bilingual Multicultural Education Equity Conference (BMEEC). It is without a doubt that the longest standing issue in Alaska Native education is our Alaska Native languages.

**KODIAK ISLANDS
TERI SCHNEIDER
VICE PRESIDENT,
Interim**

Although the ANEA Board is a volunteer board, we are very active and dedicated to our youth as well as perpetuating our Alaska Native languages. Most of us have dedicated our lives to revitalizing our Alaska Native languages, doing what is needed to uphold our language and culture. As past and present certified teachers, we have taught Alaska Native language and culture, fitting it into mainstream classes within the educational system where ever we could. Some of us have created curricula in each of our perspective regions, which includes the Alaska Native culture and language. In the 1990's some of the ANEA Board members worked with Dr. Ray Barnhardt in developing the Alaska Native Cultural Standards with the Alaska Rural Systemic Initiative (AKRSI) grant, until the grant lapsed. Most currently, we have worked with Phyllis Carlson, Director of Alaska Rural Education, on the development of a rubric, based on the Alaska Native Cultural Standards. The rubric measures how well classroom teachers are integrating the Cultural Standards into their classrooms. In spite of not having her own state budget for her department, Phyllis has managed to obtain funding from SERRC for us to work together several times throughout 2011, starting from December of 2010. The rubric is near completion but we feel we still need to meet face to face once more to finalize it and to work on a survey that will go with it on a statewide basis. We have partnered with the Future Educators of Alaska (FEA) and often hold a workshop in their conferences or they sponsor us in a workshop for the youth section during BMEEC. Another organization we have partnered with is the Alaska Native Teacher Preparation Program (ANTPP), a grant that was obtained by UAF. Lastly but not least, several ANEA Board members have participated in the Quality Teachers meetings headed by DEED.

**SOUTHWEST
NITA REARDON
TREASURER,
Interim**

**NORTHERN ARCTIC
MARTHA
STACKHOUSE
SECRETARY, Interim**

**SOUTHCENTRAL
SHIRLEY
TUZROYLUKE**

**ALEUTIAN ISLANDS
MOSES DIRKS**

ANEA firmly believes that it is vital to retain and develop Alaska Native languages. Current research supports the premise that personal persistence and identity which includes Alaska Native language development reduces suicide, as it is a concrete contribution to self-continuity. Studies show that whenever there are students taking Alaska Native language immersion classes, they thrive in all areas of study. We have seen it in our students, some of which are being chosen to participate in the state science fairs or math competitions; taking student leadership roles as high school students; and to becoming leaders in our communities.

**BRISTOL BAY
ESTHER ILUTSIK**

ANEA Board supports Senate Bill 130.

**SOUTHEAST
FLORENCE
SHEAKLEY**

Quyanaqpak, quyaana, kunish 'gish, anabase' for taking our written testimony.
Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, ANEA Co-chair
Mary White, ANEA Co-chair

Cc: ANEA Board members: Teresa Schneider, Nita Rearden, Martha Stackhouse, Esther Ilutsik, Shirley Tuzroyluke



CITY OF BARROW

"Farthest North Incorporated City"

RESOLUTION 04 - 2012

A RESOLUTION OF THE BARROW CITY COUNCIL ENCOURAGING THE ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE TO EXPEDIENTLY PASS SENATE BILL 130 – AN ACT ESTABLISHING AN ALASKA NATIVE LANGUAGE & ADVISORY COUNCIL

WHEREAS, Senator Donald C. Olson has introduced Senate Bill 130 in the State of Alaska Senate, an act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation Council and relating to the preservation, restoration and revitalization of all Alaska Native languages; and

WHEREAS, the varied Alaska Native Languages and the rich culture and traditions associated with them established the foundation on which the State of Alaska was built; and

WHEREAS, all Alaska Native Languages are threatened by extinction, including our own Inupiaq language; and

WHEREAS, for the past thirty years, the City of Barrow Mayor, Bob Harcharek, has been actively involved in researching and documenting trends and patterns of migration, the economies, language developments and educational opportunities of the residents of the North Slope Borough; and

WHEREAS, the *North Slope Borough 2011 Economic Profile and Census Report* documents the serious decline in Inupiaq competency among North Slope Borough residents; and

WHEREAS, the City of Barrow is committed to assisting any and all entities whose focus is the preservation and revitalization of the Alaska Native languages and cultures; and

WHEREAS, working and interacting with researchers and colleagues throughout the State, such as UAA Professor Emeritus Carl E. Shepro, the critical status of Alaska's Native languages has become an imperative which needs to be addressed as expediently and comprehensively as possible; and

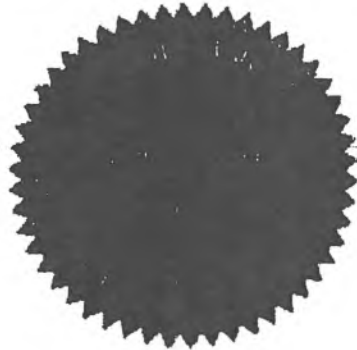
WHEREAS, the indigenous languages of our state are critical and priceless components of the heritage of our State of Alaska, which need to be nurtured to insure their preservation; and

WHEREAS, the intent of Senate Bill 130 is to preserve and maintain our Alaska Native languages which are the most critical components of cultural preservation, continuity and revitalization; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that Barrow City Council formally endorses and encourages the Alaska State Legislature to expediently pass Senate Bill 130 into law.

PASSED AND APPROVED BY THE BARROW CITY COUNCIL ON THIS 26th DAY OF JANUARY 2012 UNANIMOUSLY.

ATTEST:



Bob Harcharek
Bob Harcharek, Mayor

Tracy Benson
Tracy Benson, City Clerk

Afognak



3909 Arctic Blvd, Suite 400
Anchorage, AK 99503
(907) 222-9500 • fax (907) 222-9501

January 24, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
State Capitol Building
Room 508
Juneau, AK 99501

RE: Support of SB 130, Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council

Dear Senator Olson:

Afognak Native Corporation offers its strong support for SB 130, "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages."

Today there are only 45 fluent speakers of the Alutiiq language, the traditional language of the Native people of the Kodiak Archipelago, only 11 of which can speak the Northern Dialect, the traditional language of the *Ag'uanermiut* (people of Afognak). All the speakers are Elders.

Our traditional language, like so many Alaska Native languages, struggles for survival. Thankfully, through the joint efforts of the Alaska Native Corporations and Tribes in the Kodiak Archipelago and the Alutiiq Museum, we are preserving our language.

Afognak Native Corporation has funded a language program operated by the Native Village of Afognak and Native Village of Port Lions to create innovative language learning tools. KTUU Channel 2 News recently aired stories about these language preservation efforts:

- Alutiiq Language Website: <http://www.ktuu.com/features/assignmentak/learning-alutiiq-online-20120112.0.5807593.story>
- Alutiiq Iphone Application: <http://www.ktuu.com/videobeta/80965544-341f-44e4-8e14-5210bac33c9b/News/Afognak-Alutiiq-Connect-iPhone-app-intro>

Although we have made progress in language preservation, there is still much to do to revitalize our Native language. We welcome the opportunity to collaborate with the State of Alaska, school districts, and other Native organizations to ensure Alaska Native languages remain a vibrant part of Alaska's diversity.

Quyanaasinaq (thank you very much) for the opportunity to comment on this bill. If you would like to discuss our support further, please contact me at slukin@afognak.com / (907) 222-9505.

Sincerely,

Sarah L. Lukin
Senior Vice President, Corporate Affairs



ALASKA
NATIVE
HERITAGE
CENTER

January 20, 2012

Senate State Affairs Committee
Alaska State Legislature
State Capital
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Honorable Alaska State Legislators:

On behalf of the Alaska Native Heritage Center, and the many cultural and language bearers we serve and represent, I ardently express my support for Senate Bill 130 and House Bill 254 in the second session of the Twenty-Seventh Legislature, both entitled "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages."

The Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) is a 501(c) 3, non-profit organization whose mission is to serve as a gathering place for sharing, perpetuating and preserving Alaska's unique indigenous cultures, languages, traditions and values through celebration and education. Our 15-member Board of Directors is currently governed by members of the 13 Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANSCA) Regions including Cook Inlet Region Inc., Chugach Alaska Corporation, Bristol Bay Native Corporation, NANA Regional Corporation, Arctic Slope Regional Corporation, Bering Straits Native Corporation, Koniag, Inc., Sealaska Corporation, and Ahtna, Inc.

As Alaska Native people, our indigenous languages fulfill a vital role in perpetuating cultural traditions and values. It is our sincere belief that it is critical to take proactive measures now to strengthen our languages while language speakers in each of the Alaska Native culture groups still exist, and the interest and aspiration to revitalize our languages for future generations is strong. At our core, we recognize that indigenous language learning promotes increased self-esteem and confidence for Alaska Natives, particularly youth, and a strong cultural identity and knowledge of self translates into a stronger person overall. In a recent early childhood development study (McIvor 2005), University of Victoria, B.C. researchers and speech pathologists working with Canadian First Nations have documented strong linkages between indigenous children who have a strong traditional cultural and linguistic background and academic and overall well-being.

Our vision is to promote intergenerational learning from within the indigenous Alaskan community. ANHC has sought to advocate for active language learning by hosting learning sessions for several Alaska Native languages, including Unangax (Aleut), Sugstun (Alutiiq), Ifupiaq, Tlingit, and Yup'ik, while the most thorough instructional efforts have been for Dena'ina Athabascan. Further efforts are underway as ANHC seeks Administration for Native



ALASKA
NATIVE
HERITAGE
CENTER

Americans (ANA) grant funds, through the United States Department of Health and Social Services. The project will assess and identify local and statewide resources and partnerships that could be made available to Alaska Natives living in Anchorage, for teaching languages within the Eskimo-Aleut speaking, Athabascan speaking, and Tlingit/Haida/Tsimshian/Eyak speaking nations.

Progressively, ANHC is working to develop programs on site at the Center to provide indigenous language learning opportunities in a full immersion environment. Such opportunities are urgently needed at a time when all 19 indigenous languages still spoken in Alaska are endangered or critically endangered. The passing in 2008 of Chief Marie Smith Jones, the last fluent speaker of Eyak, underscores the vulnerability of Alaska Native languages.

SB 130 / HB 254 will help provide the much-needed political infrastructure, as well as resources both human and financial, to build and follow policies within and outside the state government, to promote sustainable Alaska Native language efforts. Meaningful investment by the State of Alaska in the cultural strengthening of Alaska Native languages will not only contribute to a stronger Alaska Native society, but a stronger Alaska as a whole, and therefore warrants the highest legislative priority.

I am available to discuss this matter, and provide verbal or written testimony to further provide evidence for these facts, in my vehement support for SB 130 / HB 254.

Sincerely,

Annette Evans Smith, President & CEO
Alaska Native Heritage Center



CITY OF BARROW

"Farthest North Incorporated City"

21 January 2012

Senator Donald C. Olson
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol, Room 508
Juneau, AK 99801 FAX: 907-465-4821

SUBJECT: Resolution in Support of Senate Bill 130

Good afternoon, Senator Olson:

The Administration, Council and I personally, wish to commend you on the introduction of Senate Bill 130, Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council, in the Alaska State Legislature. We understand that the first hearing on this bill will be presented in hearing tomorrow, 24 January 2012, in the Committee for State Affairs. Because of our short notice on this hearing, please submit and accept this letter as the City of Barrow's unqualified but interim support in this effort.

For the Barrow City Council meeting this Thursday, 26 January 2012, I have submitted a formal resolution indicating the City's unqualified endorsement of this legislation for Council ratification. On Friday of this week, I will send you a copy of that ratified endorsement for your files.

Senator Olson, I commend you on taking the initiative of introducing this long-overdue and necessary piece of legislation. I look forward in discussing its progress through the legislature with you. If there is any way that the City of Barrow can assist in facilitating its passage, please do not hesitate to contact me. I also look forward to visiting you in Juneau during the second week in February.

Cordially,

Bob Harcharek, Mayor

Cc: Mayor Charlotte Brower, NSB
Barrow City Council
Superintendent Peggy Cowan, NSBSD
Jana Harcharek, Director Bilingual Education NSBSD
Files

North Slope Borough

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR

P.O. Box 69
Barrow, Alaska 99723
Phone: 907 852-2611 or 0200
Fax: 907 852-0337 or 2595
email: charlotte.brower@north-slope.org



Charlotte E. Brower, Mayor

January 25, 2012

Honorable Senator Donald C. Olson
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Subj: Senate Bill 130 – Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council

Honorable Senator Olson,

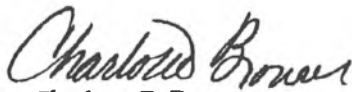
It is with pleasure and hope that I write this letter of support for Senate Bill 130 Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council: *“An Act establishing in the Office of the Governor an advisory council for the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native Languages.”*

The issue of preserving, restoring, and revitalizing Alaska Native Languages (ANLs) is of significant importance to my administration and to the people of the North Slope. This was true when the North Slope Borough (NSB) was incorporated in 1972 and has an even greater urgency today since we know far too few of our population is able to speak our language.

Senate Bill 130 seeks to establish a state-level task force within the Office of the Governor to assess our ANLs and to make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature. At the regional level, over 30 years ago, the NSB established through ordinance the Inupiat Heritage, Language and Culture (IHLC) Commission. Within our local government, this group is tasked with duties similar to those of this proposed commission as it relates to our Inupiaq language. Most recently this local commission focused on the issue of language preservation through the active participation in the development, creation, and now distribution of the North Slope Inupiaq version of Rosetta Stone language software. The Rosetta Stone project is an example of just one of many efforts of the NSB and IHLC Commission to preserve, restore and revitalize our Inupiaq language. While we are certain it is an important step in the right direction, we know there is much work ahead in the future for the North Slope and the state.

It is because of this that we give our highest possible recommendation of support of this Bill and urge the State Legislature to do the same. If we expect to succeed in the significant and challenging cause for our Alaska Native languages we must have a strong and unified effort at every level, local to state. Thank you for your consideration of our comments and recommendation of support.

Sincerely,


Charlotte E. Brower
NSB Mayor



TEL: (907) 443-5231 • FAX: (907) 443-4452

- BERVING THE
- VILLAGES OF:
- BREVIK MISSION
- COUNCIL
- DIOMEDE
- ELIM
- GAMBELL
- GOLOVIN
- KING ISLAND
- KOYUK
- MARYS IGLOO
- NOME
- SAVOONGA
- SHAKTOOLIK
- SHISHMAREF
- SOLOMON
- STUBINS
- STUBINS MICHAEL
- TELLER
- UNALAKLEET
- WALES
- WHITE MOUNTAIN

January 19, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
Alaska State Capital Room 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson,

Thank you for introducing SB 130 to establish an Alaska Native Language Advisory Council within the State of Alaska. Kawerak Inc. supports this bill and encourages the legislature to work together to pass the bill as a way to begin preserving and advancing our proud cultural heritage as Alaskans.

All Alaska Native languages are considered endangered or severely endangered by linguists. The tragic loss of Eyac in 2008 underscores the universal vulnerability of Alaska Native Languages. The continued loss of Alaskan Native cultural identities has social implications for our state's civil society; including depression, self-destructive behaviors and community shame.

In the Bering Strait region, our Native languages have been declining over the years. While we don't have a formal language survey, we know our young people and children do not speak our languages as a first language. St. Lawrence Island Yupik would be an exception, but they are also seeing a decline. The Eskimo Heritage Program is working on an Inupiaq language project called Visual Inupiaq Vocabulary Acquisition (VIVA) with the Fish River Inupiaq dialect of which there are about four fluent speakers left. We must "catch" these elders in order to help their communities to relearn and retain their language. Native language revitalization has become very critical for the Bering Strait region.

Our Native language of Inupiaq is a global one, spanning from the Chukotka side of the Russian Far East to the Bering Strait region in Alaska, through Arctic Canada and on to Greenland. The valuable importance of our language can increase cultural heritage, support sustainable communities, and encourage collaboration among generations (Elders to Youth) in various projects and programs throughout the region and state.

Kawerak Inc. supports SB 130 as a method to build statewide advocacy, research and corpus on behalf of Alaska Native language revitalization efforts, and support greater cooperation between stakeholders that is urgently needed to initiate and maintain language revitalization initiatives in all Alaskan communities.

If you have questions, please contact Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, Director of Eskimo Heritage Program at balvannastimpfle@kawerak.org or by writing to P.O. Box 948, Nome, AK 99762. Her direct line is 907-443-4386.

Sincerely,



Loretta Bullard, President

Cc: Rose Fosdick, Natural Resources VP
Bernadette Alvanna-Stimpfle, Eskimo Heritage Program Director

NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH

P.O. Box 1110

Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

(907) 442.2500 or (800) 478.1110

Fax: (907) 442.3740 or 2930

December 30, 2011

Senator Donald Olson
Alaska State Capitol Room 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

Quyanaq for introducing SB 130 to establish an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council within the State of Alaska. The Northwest Arctic Borough supports this bill and encourages the legislature to work together to pass the bill as way to begin preserving and advancing our proud cultural heritage as Alaskans.

As background, all Alaska Native languages are considered endangered or severely endangered by linguists, and the tragic loss of Eyak in 2008 underscores the universal vulnerability of Alaska Native languages. The continued erosion or disappearance of Alaskan cultural identities has social implications for our state's civil society – including depression, self-destructive behaviors and community shame.

Within the Borough/NANA Region, the Iñupiaq language has been in serious decline. In 2005 the Aqqaluk Trust with the Native Village of Kotzebue designed and administered a regional language survey of 4,112 households throughout the Northwest Arctic region's 11 communities. This survey was the most comprehensive survey of Iñupiatun speaking and understanding ability in the Northwest Arctic. Data from the 2005 regional survey were prepared by the McDowell Group, and according to the data:

- Only 18% (739) indicated understanding the Iñupiaq language well, while just 3% (113) indicated understanding the language well but hardly speaking.
- Just over 14% can speak the Iñupiaq language fluently.

Our Borough Comprehensive Plan (1993) recognizes the issues that maintaining traditional values and activities are important to the social, cultural and economic well-being of residents and whole communities. The plan recommends supporting these values including Iñupiaq language activities through education programs, land management and other Borough programs.

The Borough assembly through resolution 10-61 (see attached) recognized that our Alaska Native languages are inherently valuable and constitute vital sources of identity for all Alaskans, and reinforces positive cultural, geographic, and humanistic ties

NORTHWEST ARCTIC BOROUGH

P.O. Box 1110

Kotzebue, Alaska 99752

(907) 442.2500 or (800) 478.1110

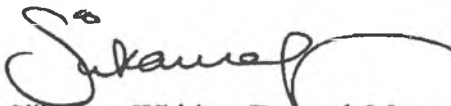
Fax: (907) 442.3740 or 2930

that make us globally unique. The valuable importance of our Iñupiaq language can increase cultural heritage, support sustainable communities, and encourage collaboration among generations (Elders to youth) in various projects and programs throughout the region and state.

The Borough supports SB 130 as a method to build statewide advocacy, research and corpus on behalf of Alaska Native language revitalization efforts, and support greater cooperation between stakeholders that is urgently needed to initiate or maintain language revitalization initiatives in all Alaskan communities.

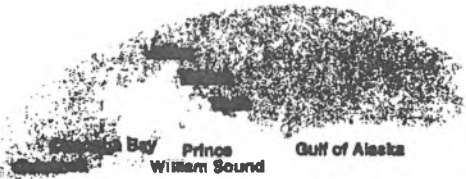
If you have any questions, please contact myself or Ukallaysaaq Tom Okleasik, Planning Director / Northwest Arctic Borough / PO Box 1110 / Kotzebue, AK 99752 / Phone 907-442-2500 / Fax 907-442-2930.

Sincerely,



Siikauraq Whiting, Borough Mayor

Cc: Ukallaysaaq Tom Okleasik, Planning Director
Puya Bob Schaeffer, Public Services Director
Linc Saito, Economic Development Director



Port Graham
Newspaper

Chugachmiut

January 18, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
Alaska State Capitol Room 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

Chugachmiut appreciates your introduction of SB 130 for the purpose of establishing an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council within the State of Alaska. We fully support the bill and encourage the legislature to adopt it this year.

As I reflect on the Suqpiaq language spoken in our area, and how close it came to extinction, I am comforted that federal language grants have given us an opportunity to preserve it and teach a new generation of speakers. Yet we are losing our teachers at a very rapid rate. One of our few Elder speakers passed away recently and we feel the loss deeply. We relied extensively on him to help guide our language restoration efforts.

Our tribes are clear and focused on preservation of Suqpiaq and teaching our youth. Nanwalek has struggled for years to support an immersion school. We are now finding some acceptance for language instruction in our public schools. Chugachmiut has collaborated with the 2 school districts with schools in our villages over the past 2 years and we hope to see more in the future.

An Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council as proposed in your bill would be extremely beneficial to our language preservation effort. Please let us know what we can do to support it.

Respectfully,

Patrick M. Anderson
Executive Director



NANA

REGIONAL CORPORATION, INC.

The Honorable Donny Olson
State Senate
Alaska State Capitol
Juneau, AK 99801

January 16, 2012

Dear Senator Olson:

Happy New Year!

NANA Regional Corporation supports Senate Bill 130, "An Act establishing in the Office of the Governor an advisory council for the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages" as well as its companion bill, House Bill 254. NANA appreciates that the passage of this bill would provide a mechanism for recommendation to the Governor of the establishment or reorganization of programs to support preservation, restoration and revitalization of Alaska Native languages. Many Alaska Native languages, which include Iñupiaq dialects found in the NANA Region, are in danger of becoming extinct. Alaska Native Languages are the key to preserving and perpetuating Alaska Native cultural ideas, philosophies and traditions as well as the rich and common history of the State of Alaska. The Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council would be a powerful tool to bring language specialists together to share best practices and to identify programs and funding tools that can be used to address the urgent issue before us. The benefits of preserving and perpetuating Alaska Native languages, especially in youth, go beyond preserving history, traditions and culture; they directly impact the health and well-being of Alaska residents, the statewide economy, and the long term sustainability and success of the State of Alaska.

Benefits Beyond Tradition:

The benefits of revitalizing and perpetuating Alaska Native languages are not limited to continuing traditions. Revitalizing Alaska Native languages will preserve Alaska's rich history and diversity while reinforcing positive Alaska Native identity in Alaska Native youth. Positive reinforcement of Alaska Native identities in students can reduce youth suicide rates and decrease youth substance abuse. Native American language immersion schools throughout the United States (for example, Piegan Institute in Browning, Montana; Tsehootsooi Dine Bi olta in Fort Defiance, Arizona; Cherokee Immersion in Tahlequah, Oklahoma) show increased academic performance, lower suicide rates and reduced disciplinary problems. Improvement of academic performance is related to better testing scores, increased graduation rates and can increase the percentage of students obtaining a post-secondary education. In the long run, Native language programs contribute to the sustainability of communities by contributing to economic development and local capacity building as well as improvements in public safety.

Barriers to Revitalization, Preservation and Perpetuation:

There are significant barriers to perpetuating the Iñupiaq language in northwest Alaska, but organizations within the region are working hard to surmount existing obstacles. In 2005, the Aqqaluk Trust, a non-profit organization dedicated to education and language and cultural preservation that NANA contributes to, and the Native Village of

NANA

REGIONAL CORPORATION, INC.

Kotzebue surveyed the Northwest Arctic Borough. The survey showed that only 14% of the Borough's residents understand Iñupiaq fluently. The survey also found that 92% of speakers are over the age of 65. The median age of the Borough is currently 24 years old. These data show that we are faced with an uphill battle to preserve and perpetuate our language.

NANA, through the Aqqaluk Trust, is supporting efforts to revitalize and perpetuate the Iñupiaq language. NANA entered a unique partnership with Rosetta Stone to produce an interactive computer learning program as part of the Rosetta Stone Endangered Language Program. Software for the two predominant dialects in our region are available to our shareholders and the public. An additional effort to perpetuate our language – a gem in our region – is the Nikaitchaut Iḷisagviat immersion school in Kotzebue. While the efforts in our region have contributed to the perpetuation of the Iñupiaq language, greater institutional change is needed. These programs have limited audiences of learners. This coupled with limited funding to support Alaska Native language efforts, access to youth in public schools and access to adult language programs threaten to widen the generational gap between Iñupiaq speakers and non-speakers.

Coming together for Solutions:

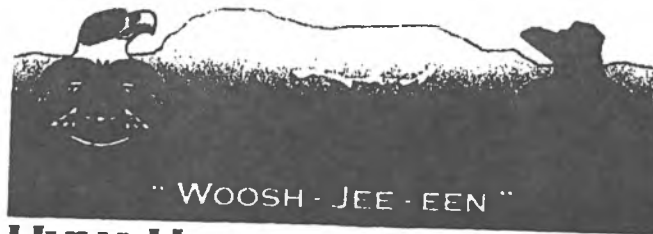
On behalf of NANA, thank you for elevating this important issue by introducing SB 130. It would be invaluable for the Council to work with the Governor's Office to create real solutions to preserving and perpetuating Alaska Native Languages. As you know, the solutions will require a team effort and a multi-pronged approach from the State, private entities and local communities. The Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council would provide a forum to identify solutions by bringing together resources from across the state to share what is working, what is not working, and how the State of Alaska and other entities can work together to ensure that our Alaska Native languages are not extinct, but are a thriving part of our communities.

NANA supports the passage of Senate Bill 130 and suggests that you consider Linda Lee, Lorena Williams, Polly Agnik Schaeffer and Barbara Atoruk, all Iñupiaq language experts, resources for the Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council and the Alaska State Legislature.

Quyaniq- thank you,


Marie N. Greene
President/CEO

NANA Regional Corporation



HUNA HERITAGE FOUNDATION

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January 23, 2012

Senator Donald C. Olson
Alaska State Capitol Rm 508
Alaska State Legislature
Juneau, AK 99801

The Huna Heritage Foundation wholeheartedly supports Senate Bill 130 which would establish the Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council to assess the State of Alaska Native Languages and re-evaluate the programs within the state and make recommendations to the Governor and Legislature to establish new programs or reorganize the current programs.

SB 130 would help to preserve and maintain Alaska Native Languages which are critical to the preservation and cultural ideas and traditions of all Alaska Natives.

We believe that SB130 would support indigenous languages and help stem the tide of language extinction within the great state of Alaska.

Sincerely,

Marlene Johnson
Board President
Huna Heritage Foundation



23 January 2012

Honorable Donny Olson, Senator
Alaska State Legislature
Alaska State Capitol, Rm. 508
Juneau, Alaska 99801

Dear Senator Olson:

It brings me gratification to see the introduction of Senate Bill 130 - Alaska Native Language & Advisory Council, "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the preservation, restoration and revitalization of Alaska Native Languages."

I have been working in the field of language preservation and perpetuation for nearly 40 years and have seen first hand the extreme decline of the Iñupiaq language. A handful of our people have devoted their lives to teaching it in the hopes of reversing this loss. Much remains to be done.

I write in support of the bill and urge passage. Having an Advisory Council whose responsibility would be to advocate for Native languages across the state will go a long ways towards creating an atmosphere where we can realize a shift in language priorities in Alaska. It is high time the state recognize the importance of perpetuating the languages of its indigenous peoples.

Quyanaq.

Respectfully yours,

Jana Harcharek, Director
Iñupiaq Education

Tanana Chiefs Conference
Chief Peter John Tribal Building
122 First Avenue, Suite 600
Fairbanks, Alaska 99701-4897
(907) 452-8251 Fax: (907) 459-3952

Via Email: [Senator Donny Olson@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Donny_Olson@legis.state.ak.us)
[Senator Bill Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us](mailto:Senator_Bill_Wielechowski@legis.state.ak.us)
Senate State Affairs Committee Members, via individual email

RE: Support for CS/SB 130 – “An Act establishing an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council.”

Dear Senator Olsen,

From its beginning of time, the truest picture and the deepest thoughts and feelings of this great land have been woven into the words of Alaska's indigenous people and their languages. A part of this Great Land's heart and mind and soul is lost forever, whenever one of Alaska's Native languages dies.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference views CS for SB 130 as a humble but important beginning of a process and partnership that brings Alaskans together to build a permanent legacy that will enrich the future of all Alaskans.

For many years, the Athabascan tribes of the Interior, along with other tribes and local, regional and state-wide organizations and educational institutions throughout Alaska have strongly encouraged the state to partner with them in supporting their efforts to preserve, restore and revitalize one of Alaska's most unique and cherished legacies - its Native languages.

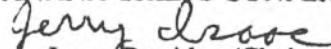
Over the years, issues relating to Alaska Native language preservation, restoration and revitalization have been raised and approached by a patchwork of programs and projects. Numerous tribes, organizations and educational institutions have expended a considerable amount of time and resources to study and address issues related to Alaska's Native languages, and numerous Native language-related bills have been introduced in the legislature.

CS/SB 130 establishes a process to bring together collective and representative knowledge and experience that can provide guidance to state and tribal leadership regarding a more coordinated strategy to preserve, restore and revitalize Alaska's Native languages.

The Tanana Chiefs Conference most strongly supports the spirit and intent of CS for SB 130. We deeply appreciate your willingness to sponsor the bill, and encourage all members of the legislature to support its passage during this session.

Tsen`ii (Thank you)

TANANA CHIEFS CONFERENCE


Jerry Isaac, President/Chairman

January 18, 2012

Senator Donald Olson
Community and Regional Affairs Committee Chair
State of Alaska
State Capitol Building Rm 508
Juneau, AK 99801

Honorable Senator Olson:

I am writing to convey my support for Senate Bill 130, a bill to establish an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council. The creation of such a council is desperately needed and is long overdue.

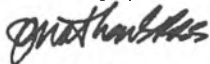
In recognition of the languages of the Alaska Native peoples being treasures, and in support of our own efforts, as indigenous peoples, to maintain and develop our languages, it is my belief that the State of Alaska should make it a policy to act and assist the effort to revitalize, maintain, and development of the languages of Alaska's indigenous people with the creation of an Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council.

In addition to a making a shift from a past colonial government policies which have devastated languages and cultures of Alaska's indigenous peoples, and current policies which have perpetuated their decline, significant resources should also be applied to implement the initial and on-going activities of the Council. Time is of the essence as we continue to have elders and best indigenous language speakers pass on. As our languages are restored and valued for the treasures that they are Alaska will become a richer place for all.

I understand you are compiling a list of people to provide testimony during the first committee hearing with State Affairs which is chaired by Senator Wielechowski. I am willing to testify by phone during the committee hearing which is scheduled for Tuesday, January 24th at 9:30am. I could be available to call in at about 9:15 if I am provided the opportunity.

Thank you for sponsoring this legislation and for your support of the Alaska Native peoples of Alaska.

Shesh t'qe\ani,



Jonathon S. Ross
President and Principle Consultant

Alaska Native Language Revitalization

Prepared for the
Alaska State Legislature
SB 130 Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council

By

Rosita Kaahani Worl, Ph.D.
Sealaska Heritage Institute
Juneau, Alaska 99801

January 31, 2012

In honor of my ancestors and in respect to this committee, I am privileged to tell you who I am:

Lingít x'eináx Yéideiklats'okk ka Kaahaní ax saayí.

Shangukeidí ka Cháak' naa xat sitee.

Kawdliyaayi Hit áyá xát.

Lukaax.adi yádi áyá xát.

My Tlingit names are Yéideilats'ok and Kaahaní

I am of the Thunderbird Clan and the Eagle Moiety.

I am from the House Lowered from the Sun of Klukwan.

I am a Child of the Sockeye Clan.

My Tlingit names embody my social identity and cultural values. They establish a bond between me and my ancestors, and they create a responsibility to our future generations. My social identity reflects our world view and our relationship to our land and environment.

My English name is Rosita Worl, and I serve as President of the Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI), whose mission is to perpetuate and enhance the cultures of the Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshians. SHI has been engaged in language restoration efforts for the last twelve years.

I am here today to testify in support of Senate Bill 130, "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the

Preservation, Restoration, and Revitalization of Alaska Native languages.” I would also like to commend you in this noble effort to support the rich linguistic and cultural diversity of this State.

I will not dwell on the historical reasons and circumstances as to why Native languages are on the verge of extinction. Rather, I will focus on the positive results that the adoption of this bill and language revitalization can bring to Alaska Natives and to the State of Alaska.

First, it is important to briefly outline the status of Alaska Native languages today. Unless remedial action is initiated, most all of Alaska Native languages will join their already extinct linguistic relative, the Eyak, within a few short decades. According to a UNESCO report on endangered languages, Inupiaq in the North Slope and Kotzebue and the Gwich'in Athabaskan languages are “severely endangered,” meaning that the languages are spoken by grandparents and older generations. While the parent generations may understand Inupiaq and Gwich'in Athabaskan, they do not generally speak these languages to children or among themselves. Aleut and the Southeast Alaska Native languages are “critically endangered” meaning that the youngest speakers are grandparents and older, and they speak the language partially and infrequently. Yup'ik, which is the healthiest indigenous language in Alaska, is classified as “vulnerable.” This means that most children speak the

language; but it may be restricted to certain domains such as in the home. I note with deep regret that Eyak is extinct.

In the 1990s, Alaska Natives began to advocate in earnest for the revitalization of indigenous languages. Sealaska was successful in advancing an amendment to the Native American Languages Esther Martinez Act of 1992 that provided for language revitalization programs in Alaska based on the status of our language restoration efforts at that time. I am enclosing a report prepared by the Sealaska Heritage Institute that provides an overview of the language programs administered by Alaska Native organizations today. We apologize that it may be an incomplete record, but it should provide for you the range and the limitations of the programs that are operating in the state. To my knowledge, state funding is not available for language restoration programs. The unfortunate reality is that the federal funding level has been woefully inadequate with something like \$4 million in competitive grants available annually for all tribes throughout the United States. The gains we made in federal funding through aggressive advocacy on our part have been offset by the shrinking federal appropriations in the last few years, and we are yet struggling to ensure that funding for the Alaska Native Education Equity Act continues. Thus, the state's effort to support the preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages becomes even more critically imperative.

It is also important to briefly review the work of the Alaska Native Language Center in the event it might be suggested that its work may be duplicated by the proposed Alaska Native Language and Advisory Council. The ANLC was established by state legislation in 1972, and it has focused on the documentation of Alaska Native languages. While the study of Native languages is important, documentation, which has been the primary focus on the ANLC, does not by itself, lead to restoration of a language. Documentation does not include the development of curriculum or the training of teachers to provide instruction on Native languages. Native language curricula and Native language teachers are critical in language revitalization. Rather than documentation, the heart of the Council's work will be to "advise the governor and the legislature on programs, policies, and projects for cost effective preservation, restoration, and revitalization of Alaska Native languages in the state." This work together with the necessary funding can ensure that one of our most significant resources in the state survives.

Native organizations have the capacity to implement language revitalization programs as reflected by the report I am submitting to you. Native Peoples have been staunch advocates of language revitalization efforts, and I would stress that it is essential that Native organizations be eligible recipients of state funds. Michael Krauss, the foremost linguist in the state, recognized the importance of Native American organizations and tribes as applicants for funding in his testimony supporting the Native American Languages Act of

1992. He stated “you cannot from outside inculcate into people the will to revive or maintain their languages” (Hinton 2001).

I would further recommend that the legislature and administration adopt interim measures to immediately support revitalization language projects for the most critically endangered languages. However, I also want to assure you that I am of the firm opinion that the legislation to establish the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council must be adopted if we are to ensure the survival of Native languages. The Council must formulate policies that support the revitalization of Native languages and identify barriers that threaten the survival of Native language.

Significantly, one of the most immediate effects of the legislation is that it would serve to reverse the perception that the State of Alaska is adverse to linguistic diversity. It would further send a powerful message that Alaska sees indigenous languages as a part of its heritage to be protected. Unfortunately, the adoption of the English-Only legislation in 1998¹ was interpreted by many, and certainly by the Alaska Native population, as an effort to suppress Native languages. Although this may not have been the intent, I would hope that one

¹ The legislation restricted the state from conducting business in any language other than English with limited exceptions. In 2002, a superior court ruled that the law violates free speech rights, striking the law down. In 2007, the state Supreme Court issued a 4-1 split decision, ruling that the first section of the law (requiring English to be the only language used for government functions) is unconstitutional, and the second part (requiring English for all government documents and records) is constitutional as long as duplicates can be made in other languages.

of the first recommendations that the Council advances is a proposal to the legislature and the governor that Alaska join Hawaii in declaring that the state is officially multi-lingual.

The adoption of this legislation could also send a powerful message that indigenous languages are not evil or inferior to English. Children growing up with the perception that their language and culture are inferior more often develop low self-esteem, and studies have revealed that low self-esteem is a major factor in failure at school.

Conversely, a positive self-identity is a prerequisite to academic achievement. However, the emotional benefit of a positive self-identity must be accompanied by real changes in the classroom that provide for the teaching of Native language and culture. This will require considerable work and funding.

Sealaska Heritage Institute has consistently conducted evaluations of our programs in which Native language and culture are taught in schools. The curricula we have developed and the professional development workshops we have offered to teachers are oriented towards the instruction of Native language and culture. Equally important, our objectives have been to improve the academic status of our students by advancing critical thinking, knowledge and science. Our evaluations reveal that students do better academically when they are taught Native language and culture. We are preparing a longitudinal

study of students who have participated in the demonstration project we initiated in the Juneau schools, and we will be pleased to share the report with the committee when it is complete. We are confident that the study will demonstrate the academic achievement which results from the incorporation of Native language and cultural studies into the classroom. However, we have grave concerns that the school district will not be able to sustain their minimal efforts they have provided in teaching Native languages.

I believe that the legislature understands the social and economic costs to a society and to the state when a significant percent of the population has a poor education. It is my hope that our society will come to accept and understand that the incorporation of Native language and culture into our schools leads to improved academic success that ultimately benefits the individual students as well as our state and society.

Native languages contain intellectual wealth accumulated through thousands upon thousands of years. They have conveyed how Native people see and use the land. The difference in world views among different Alaska Native cultural groups was readily apparent to me when I was conducting field work in the North Slope studying whale hunting. I absolutely could not see the grey patches on the horizon that my companion hunters saw that signified open water. Neither did I know the over eighty terms they had in their language to distinguish the different types of ice (Nelson 1969). Knowledge of ice is critical

to the survival of the hunters who harvest whale, marine mammals and fowl on the sea ice. The 3,300 Tlingit place names that Sealaska Heritage will be publishing in a cultural geographic atlas provide knowledge about our environment and land in Southeast Alaska. Interestingly, these names may also provide information about climate change through thousands of years. Language is a uniquely a human gift central to our experience of being human and Alaska Natives. This knowledge and the differing world views are worthy of protection and transmittal to future generations. Linguistic and cultural diversity is a benefit to society.

Unfortunately Native languages are on the road to extinction unless we initiate immediate efforts to rectify this trend. I urge that the legislature act immediately to adopt SB 130, "An Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council and relating to the Preservation, Restoration, and Revitalization of Alaska Native languages."

I would like to dedicate my testimony to the late Dr. Bill Demmert of Klawock, who served as a Professor of Education at the University of Alaska Southeast. He was the first and only Native to serve as Commissioner of the State of Alaska Department of Education. He was an educator with national prominence and was instrumental in the passage of the Indian Education Act. He was also a staunch advocate of Native language restoration and studied how Native language contributes to academic success. We were fortunate to

have him serve on the Board of Trustees of the Sealaska Heritage Institute. I would also like to respectfully recommend that the state legislature consider incorporating his name into the title of SB 130 "The Bill Demmert Act establishing the Alaska Native Language Preservation and Advisory Council." It would be a tribute to all who have worked tirelessly to revitalize Alaska Native languages.

Gunulchéesh

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Sealaska Heritage Institute
Alaska Native Language Programs

January 2012

Alaska Natives are comprised of seven linguistic groups including the Inupiat, Yup'ik, Aleut, Athabascan, Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian. Each has or had its own indigenous language. But today, no group is producing new speakers with Native as their first language. Many have language revitalization efforts in which students learn many nouns, some verbs, some greetings and introductions. None are producing fluent or even proficient speakers. Most programs are for beginners and a few are for intermediate learners. Very few programs are for advanced learners. Many communities have singing and dancing groups where individuals learn songs in their Native language and may or may not know the meaning of the words they are singing. At this time, many young Native individuals have expressed great interest in learning their language. Native language acquisition formerly occurred in the homes. Because of many factors, parents today do not know their Native language and are unable to teach the language to their children. The challenge of teaching Native languages has largely been left to schools and community organizations. This paper provides a brief summary of programs offered around the state. Not all regions responded to the request from Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI) for information about their language programs. We received responses from seven regions. The Arctic Slope and Aleutian Pribiloff provided SHI the most detailed information. Other language revitalization programs may exist in Alaska of which we are not aware.

From Barrow to Metlakatla, community organizations and school districts are offering language programs. In the Arctic Slope, the schools teach the four dialects of Iñupiaq throughout the 12 schools in the district. The Iñupiaq Education program has created VIVA (Visual Iñupiaq Vocabulary Acquisition) online language units. Each unit contains its own assessment and scoring—students' keep track of their own progress. Once a unit is completed, the students practice their verbal pronunciation with a fluent speaker—the district employs fourteen fluent Iñupiaq speakers. This program is noteworthy for several reasons: sequential units based on the Greymorning method, scoring contained within each unit; emphasis on hearing the language tied with images rather than words and pronunciation work with fluent speakers. Classes are

held 3-5 times per week in the elementary school and are available as electives in the middle and high schools. Production of the VIVA units requires a full-time curriculum developer. The units are recorded in four Iñupiaq dialects. The North Slope Borough School District (NSBSD) is also working with cultural units and developing a math program based on the traditional Iñupiaq number system.

Nome is adapting its language program based on the NSBSD materials. They are receiving training from the curriculum developer on how to create their own programs using 'flash'. This region has a web-based vocabulary development game. They are recording fluent speakers of the different Iñupiaq dialects. Their record demonstrates the benefits of sharing resources, materials and staff knowledge to maximize the language revitalization efforts in our state.

In the northwest Arctic, 14% of residents are fluent in Iñupiaq. Of these speakers, 92% are over the age of 65.² Despite the disheartening statistics, communities are taking action to ensure the language survives. NANA Regional Corporation entered into a unique partnership with Rosetta Stone to produce an interactive computer learning program as part of the Rosetta Stone Endangered Language Program. Software for the two predominant dialects in the region was made available to the head of household for each family of shareholders and is available for sale. An additional effort to perpetuate the language in the region is the immersion school in Kotzebue, Nikaitchuat Ilisagviat. For 13 years, approximately 20 students age 3 through first grade have been learning all subjects solely in Iñupiatun. The Nikaitchuat staff hope to someday offer more grades at the school. The University of Alaska Fairbanks Chukchi Campus based in Kotzebue, offers an Iñupiaq A.A.S. degree and certificate program. Classes are available online so students in the villages are able to participate. Finally, the Aqqaluk Trust is a non-profit organization with the mission: "Empowering the Iñupiat people through language, culture and education." The Aqqaluk Trust coordinates the regional Iñupiaq Language Commission and conducts Camp Sivunniigvik each summer, at which children from across the region spend one week sessions on the banks of the Kobuk River enveloped in Iñupiaq traditions, values and the Iñupiaq language.

Bethel has operated an immersion school for more than 17 years. They have produced many materials including Big Books in their Yup'ik language.

² Survey of Residents of the Northwest Arctic Borough conducted by the Aqqaluk Trust and the Native Village of Kotzebue in 2005.

Other regions are also making use of technology. The Kodiak area has produced an online audio dictionary and electronic Alutiiq flashcards. They also have a Stories and Lost Words project and are in a consortium with Port Lions and the Aluuttig Museum. Today there are only 45 fluent speakers of the Alutiiq language, the traditional language of the Native people of the Kodiak Archipelago, only 11 of which can speak the Northern Dialect, the traditional language of the *Ag'uanermiut* (people of Afognak). All the speakers are Elders. Alutiiq, like so many Alaska Native languages, struggles for survival. Afognak Native Corporation has funded a language program operated by the Native Village of Afognak and Native Village of Port Lions to create innovative language learning tools. See Alutiiq Language Website: <http://www.ktuu.com/features/assignmentak/learning-alutiiqonline-20120112,0,5807593.story> and Alutiiq iPhone Application: <http://www.ktuu.com/videobeta/80965544-341f-44e4-8e14-5210bac33c9b/News/Afognak-Alutiiq-Connect-iPhone-app-intro>. Through the joint efforts of the Alaska Native Corporations and Tribes in the Kodiak Archipelago and the Alutiiq Museum, language restoration efforts are underway.

The Chugach Region has produced many posters, videos and books. They also teach Alutiiq at Spirit Camp each summer.

The Aleutian Pribilof Islands region is the only one of the seven regions who reported that Native language still spoken in the home although we suspect this is also the case in Yup'ik villages. The village of Atka reports that Unangam Tunuu (Aleut) is still spoken in one-fourth of the homes. They report that there are 124 fluent speakers still living representing 3.5% of the enrolled tribal members. Two of the 12 schools in the region offer language and culture classes in the curriculum. Ten schools offer limited exposure to language and culture. In Atka, where ¼ of the homes still speak Unangam Tunuu (Aleut), a fluent speaker teaches language classes one hour/day. In St. Paul, a certified teacher is also a fluent Unangam Tunuu speaker. She teaches one language class, five days per week. There is an active singing and drumming group. Youth and elders collaborate to write lyrics for new songs. At community gatherings elders speak Unangam Tunuu. Three culture camps are held during the summer months. The region is seeking \$1,000,000 to create a Rosetta Stone product for Unangam Tunuu. The corporation board of directors has committed themselves to one hour of language lessons during each of the three annual meetings.

Southeast Alaska has many and varied programs. Throughout the region, “language learners,” who are teachers and who are yet learning their Native language, teach with few exceptions all language classes in some cases in collaboration with fluent speakers. Yakutat has federal funding to write children’s stories in Tlingit and develop learning materials for the stories. Local students and artists illustrate the stories. The core language staff work with fluent speakers on a weekly basis. Classes are taught outside the school system. Klukwan classes are taught in the school while in Haines, language classes are taught in the local museum. In Juneau, the Goldbelt Heritage Foundation is developing curriculum and working with teachers and fluent speakers to develop lessons using the Tlingit Verb Index. The region-wide entity, Sealaska Heritage Institute, produces curriculum and provides teacher training on a region-wide basis. SHI is concentrating on the Developmental Language Process (DLP) and has produced curriculum materials for academic content areas (math, science, social studies and literature), as well as Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian DLP units. SHI has also published Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian dictionaries and has highly popular interactive language programs on its website. SHI sponsors summer basketball camps in which Native language instruction is integrated into basketball training. Both Goldbelt Heritage and SHI sponsor summer camps for youth. The camps feature language classes but are not conducted in the language. Other communities in Southeast have Tlingit language classes in the schools (Hoonah, Sitka and Kake). Wrangell and Ketchikan have programs after school.

In addition to offering classes, Ketchikan Indian Community has devoted time and grant money to improve advanced learner skills. One Haida, Tsimshian and Tlingit advanced learner is teamed with fluent speakers. They spend a significant amount of their week with the fluent speakers. The goal is to increase the learners’ skills to proficiency. This is the only program in the state with that stated goal although others may be doing the same work.

University of Alaska Southeast has offered Tlingit classes at beginners and intermediate levels, as well as studies of oral literature and narratives. UAS also offers mentor-apprentice classes. The University of Alaska Anchorage and Fairbanks also offer Native language classes.

In summary, a significant effort is being expended in the state to revitalize Native languages. The programs focus on using technology to teach vocabulary. Most regions are recording fluent speakers. Some regions are sharing resources and adapting materials for their own dialects. None of the regions reported stability in their Native language. Fluent speakers are passing

on with no new speakers replacing them. Hundreds of learners of all ages are learning nouns, verbs, greetings and introductions. Few progress to proficiency.

The major expressed needs are:

- Programs to support teacher language learners to work with fluent speakers to increase their own language proficiency. Mentor apprentice programs appear to be very effective.
- Programs to recruit more language learners into the teaching of the language.
- Stable funding for these programs so that teacher/learners know they can count on their program continuing.
- Curriculum development at all levels and ongoing, teacher training workshops.