

HB

117

<TARGET><BILL>HB 117</BILL><SUBJECT>HB
117</SUBJECT><COMM>HCRA28</COMM></TARGET>

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

MEMORANDUM

Date: February 4, 2014
To: Representative LeDoux, Co-chair, House C&RA Committee
Representative Nageak, Co-chair, House C&RA Committee
From: Rep. Josephson
Re: Hearing Request for House Bill 117

Representatives LeDoux and Nageak:

I respectfully request a hearing in the House Community and Regional Affairs Committee for House Bill 117, relating to community revenue sharing.

House Bill 117 increases the amount the legislature may appropriate annually to the community revenue sharing fund from \$60 million to \$90 million. This level of annual appropriation will result in \$90 million being distributed to communities based on the formula in AS 29.60. Local governments use revenue sharing money to reduce property taxes and to fund necessary community services. Smart things happen when Alaskans make decisions locally – decisions based on local knowledge of what works and what is needed in each town.

The accompanying appropriation bill, HB 118, has been referred to the House Finance Committee.

Attached is the requested sponsor statement, copy of the bill, draft CS incorporating a change made last session to the underlying statute, and supporting materials. I would be happy to prepare any other necessary documents or provide additional information. The department will prepare a fiscal note when the bill is scheduled for a hearing. As this legislation will have statewide impact, I suggest that hearings be teleconferenced to all LIO's. I can provide a witness list prior to a hearing. Feel free to contact me anytime. Thank you for your consideration.

Best Regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Andy Josephson".

ALASKA STATE LEGISLATURE



REPRESENTATIVE ANDY JOSEPHSON

Sponsor Statement

House Bill 117: Community Revenue Sharing

House Bill 117 increases the amount the legislature may appropriate annually to the community revenue sharing fund from \$60 million to \$90 million. This level of annual appropriation will result in \$90 million being distributed to communities based on the formula in AS 29.60.

Local governments use revenue sharing money to reduce property taxes and to fund necessary community services. Smart things happen when Alaskans make decisions locally – decisions based on local knowledge of what works and what is needed in each town.

The \$60 million benchmark was set by the legislature in 2008. An additional \$20 million was provided through the capital budget in FY 12, and an additional appropriation of \$25 million was made in FY13. However, community revenue sharing dropped back to \$60 million in FY 14.

The accompanying appropriation bill, HB 118, has been referred to the House Finance Committee.

Developing our resources is only half of what it means to be a resource state. Bringing the benefits of that wealth home to Alaskans will define our success.

28-LS0479N
Wallace
1/31/14

CS FOR HOUSE BILL NO. 117()
IN THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA
TWENTY-EIGHTH LEGISLATURE - SECOND SESSION

BY

Offered:
Referred:

Sponsor(s): REPRESENTATIVES JOSEPHSON, Kawasaki, Tuck

A BILL
FOR AN ACT ENTITLED

1 **"An Act increasing the amount that the legislature may appropriate from certain oil**
2 **and gas production taxes to the community revenue sharing fund."**

3 **BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF ALASKA:**

4 *** Section 1. AS 29.60.850(b) is amended to read:**

5 (b) Each fiscal year, the legislature may appropriate to the community revenue
6 sharing fund money received by the state during the previous calendar year under
7 AS 43.20.030(c). The amount may not exceed

- 8 (1) \$90,000,000 [\$60,000,000]; or
9 (2) the amount that, when added to the fund balance on June 30 of the
10 previous fiscal year, equals \$270,000,000 [\$180,000,000].

11 *** Sec. 2. AS 29.60.855(a) is amended to read:**

12 (a) The department shall calculate the basic amount used for determining the
13 basic community revenue sharing payment for a fiscal year by applying the following
14 formula: the amount available for payments for that fiscal year under AS 29.60.850(c),

1 minus 90,000,000 [60,000,000], divided by 90,000,000 [60,000,000], plus one,
2 multiplied by 576,000 [384,000]. However, if the amount calculated is less than
3 \$220,000, the basic amount for that fiscal year is \$220,000.

Community Revenue Sharing

source: Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Municipality	FY13 \$85 Million Distribution: including 1-time funding	FY14 \$60 Million Distribution	\$90 Million Distribution for FY15 using latest populations
Adak	\$157,503	\$111,177	\$163,952
Akhiok	\$141,828	\$100,113	\$149,993
Akiak	\$160,182	\$113,068	\$169,029
Akutan	\$210,087	\$148,293	\$225,361
Alakanuk	\$183,360	\$129,428	\$193,634
Aleknagik	\$149,665	\$105,645	\$158,876
Aleutians East Borough	\$547,416	\$386,411	\$579,525
Allakaket	\$143,101	\$101,012	\$151,614
Ambler	\$154,153	\$108,813	\$162,613
Anaktuvuk Pass	\$159,043	\$112,265	\$169,240
Anchorage	\$20,698,438	\$14,609,572	\$21,950,878
Anderson	\$152,077	\$107,347	\$160,568
Angoon	\$166,546	\$117,560	\$174,880
Aniak	\$172,240	\$121,579	\$182,495
Anvik	\$141,694	\$100,019	\$149,640
Atka	\$139,952	\$98,790	\$148,724
Atkasuk	\$151,742	\$107,111	\$161,485
Barrow	\$433,756	\$306,164	\$462,251
Bethel	\$545,490	\$385,029	\$586,618
Bettles	\$137,005	\$96,709	\$144,987
Brevig Mission	\$163,933	\$115,716	\$175,374
Bristol Bay Borough	\$610,116	\$430,666	\$641,779
Buckland	\$166,345	\$117,418	\$178,335
Chefornak	\$165,072	\$116,520	\$174,739
Chevak	\$200,977	\$141,863	\$213,375
Chignik	\$142,096	\$100,303	\$150,486
Chuathbaluk	\$145,244	\$102,525	\$152,954
Clark's Point	\$139,952	\$98,790	\$147,807
Coffman Cove	\$148,125	\$104,558	\$155,492
Cold Bay	\$142,565	\$100,634	\$149,993
Cordova	\$291,141	\$205,503	\$306,298
Craig	\$219,264	\$154,770	\$228,251
Deering	\$145,512	\$102,714	\$153,800
Delta Junction	\$209,551	\$147,915	\$221,624
Denali Borough	\$653,255	\$461,115	\$685,844
Dillingham	\$297,170	\$209,758	\$312,855
Diomedede	\$144,105	\$101,721	\$152,390
Eagle	\$141,828	\$100,113	\$150,557
Eek	\$158,708	\$112,028	\$169,099
Egegik	\$143,101	\$101,012	\$151,896

Community Revenue Sharing

source: Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Ekwok	\$143,904	\$101,579	\$152,108
Elim	\$160,450	\$113,258	\$168,817
Emmonak	\$186,575	\$131,697	\$201,178
Fairbanks	\$2,284,263	\$1,612,304	\$2,414,482
Fairbanks North Star Borot	\$4,972,557	\$3,509,799	\$5,174,141
False Pass	\$137,742	\$97,229	\$146,820
Fort Yukon	\$175,254	\$123,707	\$185,597
Galena	\$168,422	\$118,884	\$178,053
Gambell	\$182,623	\$128,908	\$194,903
Golovin	\$147,589	\$104,180	\$156,761
Goodnews Bay	\$153,283	\$108,199	\$162,895
Grayling	\$147,924	\$104,416	\$157,255
Gustavus	\$168,756	\$119,120	\$179,393
Haines Borough	\$855,505	\$603,876	\$898,373
Holy Cross	\$148,125	\$104,558	\$155,774
Homer	\$481,182	\$339,639	\$506,104
Hoonah	\$188,049	\$132,737	\$200,261
Hooper Bay	\$210,623	\$148,671	\$223,951
Houston	\$270,777	\$191,130	\$287,756
Hughes	\$141,828	\$100,113	\$150,204
Huslia	\$157,101	\$110,894	\$166,702
Hydaburg	\$160,584	\$113,352	\$172,554
Juneau	\$2,879,307	\$2,032,332	\$3,051,114
Kachemak	\$167,283	\$118,080	\$176,079
Kake	\$176,058	\$124,274	\$186,161
Kaktovik	\$152,412	\$107,584	\$162,472
Kaltag	\$148,460	\$104,794	\$156,973
Kasaan	\$140,622	\$99,262	\$149,288
Kenai	\$613,749	\$433,209	\$654,936
Kenai Peninsula Borough	\$3,003,015	\$2,119,641	\$3,185,179
Ketchikan	\$691,387	\$488,007	\$730,092
Ketchikan Gateway Boroug	\$893,336	\$630,571	\$937,822
Kiana	\$161,656	\$114,109	\$172,624
King Cove	\$200,508	\$141,532	\$209,850
Kivalina	\$162,929	\$115,007	\$172,342
Klawock	\$189,522	\$133,778	\$199,415
Kobuk	\$145,445	\$102,667	\$155,210
Kodiak	\$566,791	\$400,065	\$590,849
Kodiak Island Borough	\$1,002,524	\$707,639	\$1,049,428
Kotlik	\$178,068	\$125,693	\$189,404
Kotzebue	\$352,836	\$249,049	\$369,751
Koyuk	\$158,642	\$111,981	\$168,112
Koyukuk	\$142,364	\$100,492	\$150,275
Kupreanof	\$138,278	\$97,608	\$145,763

Community Revenue Sharing

source: Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Kwethluk	\$186,307	\$131,508	\$199,204
Lake & Peninsula Borough	\$606,834	\$428,350	\$640,722
Larsen Bay	\$142,230	\$100,397	\$150,204
Lower Kalskag	\$156,498	\$110,468	\$165,292
Manokotak	\$166,077	\$117,229	\$178,688
Marshall	\$163,732	\$115,574	\$177,348
Matanuska-Susitna Boroug	\$5,733,124	\$4,046,629	\$6,186,989
McGrath	\$158,976	\$112,217	\$166,561
Mekoryuk	\$150,067	\$105,929	\$158,171
Metlakatla	\$234,002	\$165,172	\$247,710
Mountain Village	\$191,599	\$135,243	\$204,774
Napakiak	\$159,981	\$112,927	\$169,522
Napaskiak	\$165,072	\$116,520	\$175,162
Nenana	\$163,331	\$115,291	\$172,131
New Stuyahok	\$169,962	\$119,972	\$179,252
Newhalen	\$147,924	\$104,416	\$159,088
Nightmute	\$155,694	\$109,901	\$163,811
Nikolai	\$142,297	\$100,444	\$151,614
Nome	\$387,803	\$273,730	\$401,971
Nondalton	\$147,321	\$103,991	\$155,633
Noorvik	\$177,934	\$125,598	\$189,192
North Pole	\$280,825	\$198,222	\$299,741
North Slope Borough	\$731,362	\$516,245	\$774,537
Northwest Arctic Borough	\$606,700	\$428,255	\$641,568
Nuiqsut	\$164,670	\$116,236	\$175,867
Nulato	\$154,153	\$108,813	\$162,472
Nunam Iqua	\$148,393	\$104,747	\$158,876
Nunapitchuk	\$172,776	\$121,957	\$182,847
Old Harbor	\$149,799	\$105,740	\$159,863
Ouzinkie	\$147,924	\$104,416	\$157,043
Palmer	\$545,758	\$385,218	\$573,011
Pelican	\$141,493	\$99,877	\$149,570
Petersburg	\$760,702	\$536,954	\$800,975
Pilot Point	\$140,555	\$99,215	\$148,935
Pilot Station	\$175,991	\$124,227	\$188,276
Platinum	\$140,957	\$99,499	\$148,442
Point Hope	\$180,747	\$127,584	\$192,154
Port Alexander	\$140,421	\$99,121	\$148,653
Port Heiden	\$144,239	\$101,816	\$152,319
Port Lions	\$149,464	\$105,503	\$157,255
Quinhagak	\$182,154	\$128,577	\$192,647
Ruby	\$148,393	\$104,747	\$158,242
Russian Mission	\$156,900	\$110,752	\$165,997
Saint George	\$141,761	\$100,066	\$150,839

Community Revenue Sharing

source: Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Saint Mary's	\$171,101	\$120,775	\$182,354
Saint Michael	\$163,063	\$115,102	\$173,047
Saint Paul	\$166,345	\$117,418	\$175,938
Sand Point	\$201,848	\$142,477	\$215,772
Savoonga	\$183,762	\$129,711	\$194,621
Saxman	\$164,938	\$116,425	\$172,977
Scammon Bay	\$171,905	\$121,343	\$180,521
Selawik	\$193,341	\$136,473	\$205,479
Seldovia	\$152,211	\$107,442	\$161,273
Seward	\$320,481	\$226,212	\$319,341
Shageluk	\$140,622	\$99,262	\$149,358
Shaktoolik	\$154,488	\$109,050	\$163,177
Shishmaref	\$174,852	\$123,423	\$186,161
Shungnak	\$154,019	\$108,719	\$164,728
Sitka	\$1,288,507	\$909,501	\$1,357,277
Skagway	\$608,374	\$429,437	\$645,234
Soldotna	\$423,976	\$299,261	\$446,035
Stebbins	\$173,914	\$122,761	\$185,808
Tanana	\$151,608	\$107,016	\$160,780
Teller	\$152,747	\$107,820	\$160,991
Tenakee Springs	\$146,182	\$103,187	\$153,941
Thorne Bay	\$170,029	\$120,019	\$180,521
Togiak	\$194,345	\$137,182	\$205,902
Toksook Bay	\$178,738	\$126,165	\$188,417
Unalakleet	\$182,891	\$129,097	\$193,423
Unalaska	\$455,393	\$321,436	\$477,973
Upper Kalskag	\$150,335	\$106,118	\$159,652
Valdez	\$413,593	\$291,933	\$433,133
Wainwright	\$173,847	\$122,714	\$182,283
Wales	\$146,182	\$103,187	\$154,575
Wasilla	\$685,760	\$484,036	\$733,758
White Mountain	\$148,593	\$104,889	\$157,889
Whittier	\$151,206	\$106,733	\$160,145
Wrangell	\$843,983	\$595,744	\$893,156
Yakutat	\$585,666	\$413,409	\$619,853

Cities & Boroughs
Total: \$55,362,141

Boroughs
Total:

Cities & Boroughs
Total: \$83,045,193

Unincorporated
Communities
Outside Boroughs
Total: \$3,021,859

Unincorporated
Communities
Outside
Boroughs Total:
\$4,278,609

Unincorporated
Communities
Outside Boroughs
Total: \$4,530,807

Community Revenue Sharing

source: Division of Community and Regional Affairs

Unincorporated Communities Inside Boroughs Total:	Unincorporated Communities Inside Boroughs Total:	Unincorporated Communities Inside Boroughs Total:
\$1,616,000	\$2,288,000	\$2,424,000
Total Revenue Sharing: \$60,000,000	Total Revenue Sharing: \$85,000,000	Total Revenue Sharing: \$90,000,000

Sec. 29.60.830. Definition. Article 08. COMMUNITY REVENUE SHARING PROGRAM In AS 29.60.800 - 29.60.830, "regional housing authority" means a regional housing authority established under AS 18.55.996.

Sec. 29.60.850. Community revenue sharing fund. (a) The community revenue sharing fund is established in the general fund for the purpose of making community revenue sharing payments to municipalities, reserves, and communities for any public purpose. The fund consists of appropriations. Income earned on money in the fund may be appropriated to the fund. Money in the fund does not lapse.

(b) Each fiscal year, the legislature may appropriate to the community revenue sharing fund money received by the state during the previous calendar year under AS 43.20.030(c). The amount may not exceed

(1) \$60,000,000; or

(2) the amount that, when added to the fund balance on June 30 of the previous fiscal year, equals \$180,000,000.

(c) The balance in the community revenue sharing fund shall be determined on June 30 of each year. If the fund balance is at least \$60,000,000, without further appropriation, the department shall distribute one-third of that amount as community revenue sharing payments for the immediately following fiscal year. Otherwise, no payments may be made.

(d) Notwithstanding the guidelines in (b) of this section, the legislature may appropriate any amount to the community revenue sharing fund. Nothing in this section creates a dedicated fund.

Sec. 29.60.855. Basic community revenue sharing payments. (a) The department shall calculate the basic amount used for determining the basic community revenue sharing payment for a fiscal year by applying the following formula: the amount available for payments for that fiscal year under AS 29.60.850(c), minus 60,000,000, divided by 60,000,000, plus one, multiplied by 384,000. However, if the amount calculated is less than \$220,000, the basic amount for that fiscal year is \$220,000.

(b) Except as provided in (c) of this section, the basic community revenue sharing payment for a fiscal year equals, for each

(1) unified municipality, the sum of the amounts calculated under (2) and (3) of this subsection, rounded to the nearest \$1,000;

(2) borough, the basic amount, rounded to the nearest \$1,000;

(3) city and eligible reserve, one-fourth of the basic amount, rounded to the nearest \$100;

(4) eligible community in the unorganized borough, one-twelfth of the basic amount, rounded to the nearest \$100;

(5) eligible community in a unified municipality or borough, one-nineteenth of the basic amount, rounded to the nearest \$100.

(c) The basic revenue sharing payment amount for a succeeding municipality formed when two or more municipalities merge, consolidate, or unify after January 1, 2002, equals the sum of the amounts each of the former municipalities would receive under (b) of this section calculated as if the merger, consolidation, or unification had not occurred.

Sec. 29.60.860. Per capita payment increases. (a) Subject to (b) of this section, if the amount available for distribution under AS 29.60.850(c) exceeds the amount needed to fully fund all the basic community revenue sharing payments, the balance shall be distributed on a per capita basis to municipalities, to reserves, and to communities in the unorganized borough.

(b) The per capita amount distributed to each community in the unorganized borough may not, when added to the basic community revenue sharing payment for that community, exceed the basic amount calculated under AS 29.60.855(b)(3). If the per capita distribution for a community in the unorganized borough, when added to the basic community revenue sharing payment for that community, would exceed the basic amount calculated under AS 29.60.855(b)(3), the excess amount shall be distributed on a per capita basis to other communities in the unorganized borough.

(c) For purposes of this section, the population of a municipality, reserve, or community shall be determined by using the numbers of permanent fund dividend recipients or other population data that the department determines is reliable. For purposes of determining the population of a borough, the population of each city in the borough shall be deducted from the total borough population.

Sec. 29.60.865. Eligibility requirements for reserves and communities.

(a) The department, with advice from the Department of Law, shall determine whether there is in each community or reserve an incorporated nonprofit entity or a Native village council that will agree to receive and spend the community revenue sharing payment. If there is more than one qualified entity in a reserve or community in the unorganized borough, the department shall pay the money to the entity that the department finds most qualified to receive and spend the

money on behalf of the reserve or community. The department may not make a community revenue sharing payment to a Native village council unless the council waives immunity from suit for claims arising out of activities of the council related to the payment. A waiver of immunity from suit under this section must be on a form provided by the Department of Law. If there is no qualified incorporated nonprofit entity or Native village council in a reserve or community that is willing to receive the community revenue sharing payment and use the payment on behalf of that reserve or community, the payment for that reserve or community may not be paid. Neither this section nor any action taken under it enlarges or diminishes the governmental authority or jurisdiction of a Native village council.

(b) The department may make a community revenue sharing payment on behalf of a community in a borough or unified municipality only to the municipality for payment by the municipality to an incorporated nonprofit entity or Native village council that has been approved by the assembly and meets the requirements of (a) of this section. The department shall have written evidence of the assembly approval. If there is more than one qualified entity in a community in a borough or unified municipality, one of the entities may receive the entire payment, or the payment may be shared between two or more of the qualified entities, as determined by the assembly.

(c) A community in a borough or unified municipality is eligible for a community revenue sharing payment only if at least three of the following services are generally available to all residents of the community and each of the three services, in any combination, are provided by one or more qualifying incorporated nonprofit entities or a Native village council or are substantially paid for by the residents of the community through taxes, charges, or assessments levied or authorized by the borough or unified municipality:

- (1) fire protection;
- (2) emergency medical;
- (3) water and sewer;
- (4) solid waste management;
- (5) public road or ice road maintenance;
- (6) public health;
- (7) search and rescue.

Sec. 29.60.879. Definitions. In AS 29.60.850 - 29.60.879,

(1) "community" means a place in the unorganized borough, in a borough, or in a unified municipality that is not incorporated as a municipality, that is not a reserve, and in which 25 or more individuals reside as a social unit;

(2) "reserve" means a place that is organized under

federal law as an Indian reserve that existed before enactment of 43 U.S.C. 1618(a) and is continued in existence under that subsection.

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House panel says it will act on federal report on rural crime, but doesn't know how

By RICHARD MAUER

rmauer@adn.com March 11, 2014

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Members of an Alaska House committee said Tuesday they would act on a federal report that singled out the state for failing to protect its rural residents against violent crime, sexual assaults and suicides, though they weren't yet sure what they could do.

The U.S. Indian Law & Order Commission wrote the report and its chairman, Troy Eid, had a few suggestions. For one, he said, the state could stop suing its own people to forestall greater tribal autonomy.

"It's in every Alaskan's interest ... to not have an environment where you spend more money litigating against your Natives than all the other states in the United States combined -- and I hope you know that," said Eid, the former U.S. Attorney for Colorado and a Republican appointee to the commission. "There's got to be a cheaper way and an easier way, and I think it starts with that mutual respect."

Eid testified by telephone to the House Community & Regional Affairs Committee in Juneau about his nine-member bipartisan panel and of the chapter on Alaska in its final report -- the only state so singled out. Eid spoke from Fairbanks, where he was the keynote speaker at the annual convention of the Tanana Chiefs Conference. The report, ordered by Congress in 2010, was published in November.

Eid urged the Legislature to play a leading role in getting the state to recognize tribal authority at the village level, even if it means drawing local boundary lines to create jurisdictions for tribal police and judges, much as the state draws boundaries for borough, cities and towns. He said it was time to throw out Alaska's current model as a failure: top-down law enforcement from big cities and regional hubs from where response time can be abysmal and where officers are stretched thin.

"All nine of us -- Republicans and Democrats, Native and Non-Native, men and women -- we all think Alaska is on the wrong track. You cannot continue to have this centralized state system and support it in the manner in which it's been supported and expect anything other than disproportionately high rates of violent crime and a very a wasteful, wasteful system, that frankly, as taxpayers, is just not acceptable," Eid said.

That system has produced one of the highest suicide rates in North America and so much family violence that one in four Alaska Native juveniles suffers from post-traumatic stress disorder, he said. "That is the same rate as returning combat vets from Afghanistan," Eid said.

Holly Handler, an Alaska Legal Services Corp. attorney from Juneau representing the Alaska Federation of Natives, told the committee that the report demanded action.

"One of the more dismal observations that the commission made in Alaska was seeing how much work has been done by the state Legislature, by other state groups, by tribal groups, by commissions both federal and within the state, and seeing that those reports from the '80s, from the '90s from the 2000s, to the 2012 Rural Justice Report, how the work has been done but there hasn't been the follow-through," she said.

Rep. Bob Herron, D-Bethel, wondered how the committee could act.

"What is the intent of the co-chairs in going forward with this report?" he asked Reps. Ben Nageak, D-

Bethel, and Gabrielle LeDoux, R-Anchorage.

"I have no idea, to tell you the truth, for myself, because we wanted an opportunity to have this brought into the public through this committee," Nageak said. "It's up to discussion to what we can do. We can make recommendations, I'm sure, but obviously I don't know at this time."

LeDoux said they could have another discussion "several weeks from now."

Herron said he wanted to hear directly from Attorney General Michael Geraghty about the report. Geraghty was invited to testify Tuesday, but told the committee last week he couldn't make it because of a long-planned trip. He referred the request to Gov. Sean Parnell's senior rural affairs advisor, John Moller, and legislative director Heather Brakes.

But Moller was also at the Tanana Chiefs convention. Brakes didn't return two messages.

Herron said he saw no one from the administration that he recognized in the hearing room and suggested Geraghty be invited again.

"If we just forget about this report, it won't serve the justice that we need," Herron said. "I want on the record specifically what the attorney general is doing to get to recognition of sovereignty in this state."

Geraghty has said that the state needs to do more to make rural villages safer.

Eid praised a bill moving through the Legislature and supported by the administration that would arm village public safety officers, but said much more was needed.

Eid said it isn't necessary to resolve long-running disputes between state government and tribal authorities over control of land -- "Indian Country" -- to grant criminal jurisdiction to tribal police and courts.

"I would say emphatically the state does not currently recognize Alaska Native nations on a government-to-government basis. That needs to happen today," Eid said. "Every other state in the country does it for federally recognized Native nations, and every president since Richard Nixon. So the idea that it's somehow debatable or optional, that's the sign of an ancient era."

Reach Richard Mauer at rmauer@adn.com or 257-4345.

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