



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

July 1, 2015

The Honorable Don Young, *Chairman*
Subcommittee on Indian, Insular,
and Alaska Native Affairs
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Raul Ruiz, *Ranking Member*
Subcommittee on Indian, Insular,
and Alaska Native Affairs
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

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NCAI HEADQUARTERS
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www.ncai.org

Re: NCAI Support for H.R. 2386 – The Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act

Dear Chairman Young and Ranking Member Ruiz:

On behalf of the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the oldest, largest, and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities, I would like to thank the Subcommittee for holding a legislative hearing on H.R. 2386 – The Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act. NCAI strongly supports the legislation and urges swift passage.

In 1971, Congress passed the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) to settle aboriginal land claims of Alaska Natives and create Alaska Native Corporations to provide a means to pursue economic development for the benefit. However, five traditional Native villages were excluded from ANCSA: Haines, Petersburg, Wrangell, Ketchikan, and Tenakee. To the best of our knowledge, no reasonable explanation has ever been offered for this exclusion.

While members of these five traditional Native villages have received revenue sharing under Section 7(j) of ANCSA as Urban shareholders of the Sealaska Corporation, they have not enjoyed the social, economic, and cultural benefits of owning shares in a Village, Urban, or Group Corporation. Additionally, these members have been deprived of the significant cultural benefit of owning an interest in lands located within and around our traditional homelands.

Nearly forty-four years after ANCSA, it is time to finally complete its recognition of Native villages and land entitlement conveyance. H.R. 2386 will recognize the five traditional Native communities in Southeast Alaska under the ANCSA, and authorize each to form an Urban Corporation. Further, it authorizes each of the newly formed Urban Corporations to receive certain settlement land pursuant to ANCSA.

Passing this legislation ensures the continued economic and cultural benefits to the members of the five traditional Native Villages and secures Native ownership of many sacred and cultural sites in the Southeast Alaska region; preserving and protecting Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultural properties for current and future generations.

I would like to thank you again for your support of H.R. 2386. If you have any additional questions, please contact NCAI Staff Attorney & Legislative Counsel Colby Duren, cduren@ncai.org or (202) 466-7767.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Brian Cladoosby". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Brian Cladoosby
President



NATIONAL CONGRESS OF AMERICAN INDIANS

The National Congress of American Indians Resolution #DEN-07-097

TITLE: Urging Congress to Recognize Landless Southeast Native Communities

WHEREAS, we, the members of the National Congress of American Indians of the United States, invoking the divine blessing of the Creator upon our efforts and purposes, in order to preserve for ourselves and our descendants the inherent sovereign rights of our Indian nations, rights secured under Indian treaties and agreements with the United States, and all other rights and benefits to which we are entitled under the laws and Constitution of the United States, to enlighten the public toward a better understanding of the Indian people, to preserve Indian cultural values, and otherwise promote the health, safety and welfare of the Indian people, do hereby establish and submit the following resolution; and

WHEREAS, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) was established in 1944 and is the oldest and largest national organization of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments; and

WHEREAS, the Southeast Native communities of Haines, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Tenakee Springs, and Wrangell were not provided the authority under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) to form Native Corporations; and

WHEREAS, these communities comprise greater than 20% of the shareholders of the Sealaska Corporation; and

WHEREAS, the five landless communities have, for more than three decades, sought congressional provision for their full eligibility for ANCSA benefits; and

WHEREAS, Congress in 1993 commissioned a formal study to examine the reasons why the five communities were denied ANCSA eligibility; and

WHEREAS, no reasonable explanation has ever been provided for not including Haines, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Tenakee Springs, and Wrangell as communities which should be participating in the ANCSA settlement in the same manner as are the other Native communities of Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Native members of the landless communities continue to seek redress which would provide for the formation of ANCSA corporations, land entitlement, and recovery of lost economic benefits; and

WHEREAS, recognition of the five (5) communities is long overdue.

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NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the NCAI does hereby urge the United States Congress to recognize the Sealaska shareholders registered in the communities of Haines, Ketchikan, Petersburg, Tenakee Springs, and Wrangell as Native communities with the same status as Native communities recognized in Section 14(h) and Section 16 of ANCSA and provide authorization for those Native communities to form ANCSA corporations and select land and provide compensation for the economic opportunities lost due to the delayed recognition of their rights to share in the land entitlement in the same manner as those Native communities recognized for such participation in 1971 under ANCSA; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that this resolution shall be the policy of NCAI until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

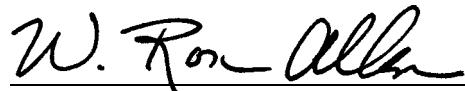
CERTIFICATION

The foregoing resolution was referred by the General Assembly at the 2007 Annual Session of the National Congress of American Indians to the Executive Committee, and adopted on December 5, 2007 by the Executive Committee, with a quorum present.



President

ATTEST:



Recording Secretary