



**ALASKA FEDERATION
OF NATIVES**

November 10, 2009

The Honorable Barack Obama
President of the United States
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear President Obama:

You have given many people across this nation the gift of renewed hope, especially the Native Americans of this great land. Last week's *Tribal Nations Conference* was inspirational not only for those Alaska Native leaders who participated in-person, but also for all of the individuals back home in Alaska who were watching and listening online. Thank you for bringing a culture of inclusion to Washington D.C., and for the steps you have taken toward revitalizing the relationship between the federal government and the First People of Alaska.

You have rekindled a sense of hope in our Alaska Native communities; hope that our relationship with the federal government may be entering a new era of increased self-determination, with healthier, stronger Native people achieving our aspirations and potential by living in communities which have life-long education as a goal, affordable energy and strong Native economies with increased opportunities for our young people.

We commend the incorporation into your Administration of highly capable, experienced people who understand the need to fully consider the effects of major national policies on Native American communities. We request that the view of these distinctly Native communities receive full and fair consideration as your Administration considers any major policies initiative in areas of general applicability such as education, housing, health care and law enforcement. The differences in effects on Native peoples are significant and legally distinct as to warrant a separate consideration.

We are delighted with Secretary Salazar's recent announcement of the Administration's commitment to undertake a comprehensive review of the Federal Subsistence Management Program in Alaska. That program grew directly out of the settlement of Alaska Native land claims in 1971. As Congress recognized in 1980 with the passage of Title VIII of the Alaska

National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), “the continuation of subsistence uses (hunting, fishing, gathering) is “essential to Native physical, economic, traditional and cultural existence...” Unfortunately, the current federal subsistence management regime has failed to adequately protect our customary and traditional subsistence way of life. We look forward to working closely with the Administration in its review of the federal subsistence program and are hopeful that meaningful changes will be made so that our people are ensured that our way of life can continue freely and undisturbed and that the purposes of ANCSA and ANILCA are fulfilled. We look forward to discussions with Secretary Salazar and his senior team. We know the results of the review will be of high interest to you and your Domestic Policy Council. We request that high level White House staff participate in the Interior Department’s review of the federal subsistence program.

Additionally, we urge your Administration to make the necessary and historic commitment to implementing your and the Congress’s goal of bringing genuine broadband to rural Alaska so that many of our communities will have new opportunities to create jobs, educate our people, and advance health care in the most rural areas of the United States here in Alaska. We applaud the dedication of your Administration to meeting the needs of those who have been consistently un-served and underserved regarding access to broadband.

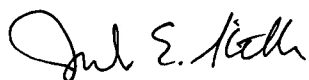
On the international level, Alaska Natives can help you. We understand much conflict originates from problems generated by the transition from a fragmented independent world to a prosperous globalized world in which we all – to one degree or another—will be interdependent. This transition, initiated in the West has now reached many corners of the world, exposing deep problems that we help resolve in a way that protects our Indigenous brothers from the harms of globalization while allowing them to enjoy its benefits. Partnerships can be supported that will help Indigenous organizations use modern economic organization and the global economy to their benefit without losing their identity. We are developing efficient strategies to empower Indigenous peoples throughout the world; the United States can proudly point to our land claims, and the development of our capacity using our Native corporations, tribal consortiums and tribes as an example of US policy that works and one that can be shared internationally. We would request an opportunity to discuss with your administration specific examples of our international efforts, especially with Indigenous peoples throughout Latin America.

Lastly, we formally invite you, the First Lady, and your children to visit Alaska soon. Our Native leadership would welcome you warmly and be very pleased to share what we have with you – our traditional foods, our dances and music, our ideas and aspirations, and what we can do together to help contribute to our country’s efforts to restart the economy, create jobs and provide leadership in the world.

We look forward to working with you and your administration on these and other priorities that have great potential to be transformative in their ability to improve the lives of Alaska Natives and thereby help us become more self-sufficient and productive contributors to the nation. With your assistance and leadership, we will meet the challenges that lie ahead united by our common convictions.

Thank you again, Mr. President.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julie E. Kitka". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Julie" being the most prominent.

Julie Kitka, President
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Cc: Alaska Congressional Delegation