



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

EXECUTIVE SUMMER REPORT, JULY 2024

AFN Announces New President

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Board of Directors has selected Benjamin Mallott as the organization’s next President. Mallott has been with AFN for more than 11 years and currently serves as the organization’s Vice President of External Affairs.

Board Co-Chair Joe Nelson said the board conducted an extensive statewide search before making its selection. “We were fortunate to receive applications from strong and impressive candidates,” Nelson said. “This enabled the board of directors to select a person who is well aligned with AFN’s mission and values. Ben understands AFN’s diversity and has demonstrated steady leadership within the organization for many years.”

Nelson cites Mallott’s background in Alaska Native issues and state and federal public policy as key to his selection. Before serving as Vice President, he was AFN’s Director of Communications and Special Assistant to the President. He also has served as a Legislative Assistant to U.S. Senator Lisa Murkowski. He currently is a member of the boards for Baan O Yeel Kon Corporation, Northern Taiga Ventures, Inc., The Nature Conservancy Alaska, the Alaska Humanities Forum, and the Alaska Native Heritage Center.

“I am deeply honored to step into this role,” said Mallott. “I look forward to working closely with all our communities to advocate for a strong future together. I also want to extend my heartfelt thanks to outgoing President Julie Kitka for her outstanding leadership and dedication. I look forward to building upon the solid foundation she’s laid over her decades of service to our communities.”

Mallott will succeed Julie Kitka who has led AFN for 33 years. Board Co-Chair Ana Hoffman said the board is grateful for Julie’s dedication to AFN and for her support during this transition. She said that Mallott will begin assuming his new role in August to allow an overlap with Kitka through October. Kitka will be the keynote speaker at AFN’s annual convention that will be held in Anchorage October 17-19, an occasion that will celebrate her outstanding legacy.

The Alaska Federation of Natives is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska. Its membership includes 177 federally recognized tribes, 154 village corporations, 9 regional corporations, and 9 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs. AFN is governed by a 38-member board.

“AFN is a diverse membership organization dedicated to reflecting the priorities of our people. In these changing times, where our values, cultural traditions, and way of life are often challenged, we remain steadfast. Together, we are stronger and will continue to thrive,” said Mallott.



Benjamin Mallott

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Alaska Day 2024 Recap

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) recently held its 8th Annual Alaska Day event on May 1 and 2 in Washington, D.C. The event was a two-day event that brought together Alaska Native leaders, industry experts, military officials, members of the Alaska and Hawaii congressional delegation, and White House officials to discuss important issues that affect Alaska Native communities.

The theme of the event was “Building Blocks for a Sustainable Future.” The event focused on various topics such as energy and infrastructure, government services, food security, hunting and fishing, communications, technology, innovation, and federal-state relations.

The event was an opportunity for participants to exchange ideas, share best practices, and develop strategies to address the most pressing issues facing Alaska Native communities. The event also provided a platform for participants to network and build relationships with other like-minded individuals and organizations.

“When you bring together some of our best in the nation’s capital to mix it up with our highest-level policymakers and policy advisors for multiple days, it is bound to be an experience that none will forget,” said Joe Nelson, AFN Co-Chair.



Joe Nelson and Senator Dan Sullivan (l-r)



Senator Lisa Murkowski and Congresswoman Mary Peltola (l-r)



Emil Notti and Willie Hensley (l-r)



Neera Tanden, Director of the Domestic Policy Council of the United States

2024 AFN Convention Update

The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) Board of Directors is proud to announce that the theme for the 2024 Convention will be “Our Children – Our Future Ancestors”. The convention will take place in Anchorage, Alaska from October 17th – 19th, 2024.

The theme highlights AFN’s commitment to recognizing that our children are the future of Alaska’s Native peoples. The convention will provide a forum for discussing ways to empower and support Alaska Native children, and to ensure that they have the tools and resources to succeed.

“AFN understands our children are the future ancestors who will carry forward our culture, heritage, language and traditions,” said AFN Co-Chair Ana Hoffman. “It is our responsibility to equip our children with the resources, relationships, confidence and knowledge to uphold and advance the legacy of Alaska’s Native peoples.”

AFN is also pleased to announce that AFN President Julie Kitka, will serve as the keynote speaker for the convention. President Kitka is widely respected for her work on behalf of Alaska Native communities and has a long track record of advocating for the rights of Alaska Native peoples and communities. President Kitka will be transitioning out of her President role after 33 years this year.

“We are thrilled to have Julie join us as our keynote speaker,” said AFN Co-Chair Joe Nelson. “Her leadership and vision have been instrumental in shaping the future of Alaska’s Native peoples, and we look forward to hearing her insights on how we can continue to build a brighter future for our children.”

AFN is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska. Its membership includes 177 federally recognized tribes, 154 village corporations, 9 regional corporations, and 10 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs. AFN is governed by a 38-member board, which is elected by its membership at the annual convention held each October.

For more information about the 2024 AFN Convention, please visit the AFN website at www.nativefederation.org/convention.



Gayla Hoseth speaking at the 2023 AFN Convention.



Nicole Borromeo

Meet the Nicoles of AFN - Nicole Borromeo

Nicole Borromeo serves the Executive Vice President and General Counsel for the Alaska Federation of Natives, the largest Native organization in Alaska. In addition to providing executive level leadership, Ms. Borromeo advises AFN's Board and President on a wide array of legislative and litigation matters, including post-pandemic economic recovery. Ms. Borromeo oversees all aspects of AFN's Navigator Program, which has secured upwards of \$1 billion for tribal communities and Native entities.

Prior to joining AFN, Ms. Borromeo held positions with the reputable law firms of Hobbs, Straus, Dean & Walker, LLP; Patton Boggs, LLP; and Sonosky, Chambers, Sasche, Miller & Munson, LLP. Her legal work has included researching policies, regulations, and laws related to federally recognized tribes, analyzing matters impacting Alaska Native corporations, and representing tribes and tribal consortia in a wide variety of areas, including governmental affairs, business transactions, and infrastructure development.

Ms. Borromeo's volunteer civic engagement includes serving as the Chairman of the MTNT, Ltd. Board of Directors; Board Member of the Alaska Redistricting Board; Workgroup Member of Indian Country Energy and Infrastructure Workgroup, U.S. Department of Energy; Committee Member of the National Advisory Committee on Race, Ethnicity, and Other Populations, U.S. Census Bureau; Council Member of the Center for Indian Country Development Leadership Council, Federal Reserve Bank of Minneapolis; Member of the Advisory Committee on Racial Equity, U.S. Department of Treasury; Board Member of the Alaska Native Justice Center; Board Member of Clare Swan Early Learning Center; Mentor for the National Association of Women Judges-Color of Justice; and a founding Board Member of Justice Not Politics Alaska. She is a recipient of the Top 40 Under 40 Award from the Alaska Chamber of Commerce.

Ms. Borromeo is a shareholder of Doyon, Limited, the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act regional corporation for Interior Alaska, and MTNT, Ltd., the ANCSA village corporation representing four Interior Alaska villages. She is an enrolled tribal member of the McGrath Native Village Council.

Ms. Borromeo holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Alaska – Anchorage and a law degree from the University of Washington School of Law. Ms. Borromeo resides in Anchorage with her husband and their four children.

Meet the Nicoles of AFN - Nicole Espe

Nicole Espe is the Special Assistant to the Vice President for the Alaska Federation of Natives. She grew up in Seattle, WA and was adopted through the Indian Child Welfare Act to parents Marchell (father, Fred Johnson, a fisherman from Cordova) and John Espe. She is Alutiiq from Old Harbor and a shareholder of Chugach.

She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from Western WA University in Environmental Studies and minors in Anthropology and American Indian Studies. She has worked in the pet care industry since she was 18 and trained dogs in Seattle for over 4 years before moving to Alaska in 2022. Alaska has always been her other home and has spent many summers here with family and has been going to AFN Conventions her whole life.

She loves nature, animals, and photography. She took photography classes in Montana for a whole summer to hone her skills and is the de facto photographer for AFN in addition to role of Special Assistant to the Vice President. She resides in Anchorage with her dog, Pojar, and cat, Biscuit.



Nicole Espe

Meet the Nicoles of AFN - Nicole James

Nicole James serves as the Executive Assistant and Board Secretary for the Alaska Federation of Natives. During the week, she handles phone calls, support emails, and provides information about AFN. She also manages the office and has been the Arts & Crafts Coordinator for several years. Nicole was raised in Anchorage and is a shareholder of Sealaska Corporation and Chugach Alaska Corporation. She is an enrolled tribal member of Tlingit & Haida. Nicole lives in Anchorage with her fiancé Thomas and is the mother of Anthony, as well as a dog mom to Koda and Kylie. She enjoys spending time with her siblings and many nieces and nephews. Her favorite Native delicacy is herring eggs.



Nicole James



Nikki Stoops

Meet the Nicoles of AFN - Nicole “Nikki” Stoops

Nikki Stoops is the Special Assistant to the President for the Alaska Federation of Natives. She joined AFN in July 2022.

Nikki was the Executive Director for the Native Village of Kotzebue before relocating with her family to Anchorage to serve as the Senior Director of Corporate Communications at the NANA Regional Corporation.

Nikki’s main focus at AFN has been communications and special events planning for Alaska Day and the annual convention. She currently volunteers for the Rural CAP Board of Directors on behalf of AFN. She received the Top 40 Under 40 Award from the Alaska Chamber of Commerce and the Native American 40 Under 40 Award from the National Center for American Indian Enterprise Development in 2019.

She is a shareholder of the NANA Regional Corporation and the Kikiktagruk Inupiat Corporation and is an enrolled tribal member of the Native Village of Kotzebue.

Nikki earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism and Mass Communication from Northeastern University in Boston, MA. She resides in Anchorage with her husband Jake and their two sons, Casey and Cale. Her favorite past time is cheering them on during their baseball games.

Meet Geoff Toy, AFN's Subsistence Legal Fellow

Geoff Toy is thrilled to be joining AFN as a legal fellow. For the past two years, Geoff has been with Trustees for Alaska, working on federal litigation protecting Alaskan lands, wildlife, and resources. Prior to joining Trustees, Geoff spent three years as a staff attorney with the Turner Environmental Law Clinic at Emory University School of Law, where he worked on land use, pollution, and agricultural issues in the Southeast and taught environmental law students. He also worked in civil litigation in Atlanta, Georgia after graduating from Emory Law in 2016. Outside of the office, Geoff likes to read, cook, hike, and paint.



Geoff Toy

Meet AFN's New Director of ICWA, Will Kronick

Will joined AFN on January 8, 2024, as the Director of the Indian Child Welfare Initiative. Under Nicole Borromeo's supervision, he will help improve ICWA implementation through a partnership between tribes, the Office of Children's Services and the Alaska Court System. Will is also helping coordinate the Navigators program, ensuring federal funding obligated to Alaska's Tribes, regional nonprofits and Alaska Native Corporations improves infrastructure in rural Alaska.

Prior to joining AFN, Will worked for nearly 8 years at Tlingit & Haida, overseeing their child welfare program, including implementing the child welfare Compact and participating in ongoing work groups and annual negotiations. Before working in child welfare, he worked with Elders and youth to realize culturally responsive education and social services in Juneau and Sitka, Alaska.

Will is a 2023 University of Alaska Fairbanks graduate, where he earned his master's degree in rural development. His bachelor's degree is from Yale University.



Will Kronick

Navigator Program Update

State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) - \$92 million. Much of AFN's Navigator Program work over the last quarter has focused on the Alaska Tribal SSBCI Consortium, that the Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at the University of Alaska (UA) is administering, with heavy education and outreach support from AFN. The SSBCI Program is a loan guarantee program designed by Congress to better enable small businesses owners from underserved communities (e.g., Alaska Natives, rural Alaska, etc.) to access capital more easily. There is a special focus on rural America in the authorizing legislation. Congress, through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), made the SSBCI Program available to federally recognized Tribal governments for the first time.

AFN's Navigator Program was instrumental in helping Alaska tribes preserve their SSBCI formula allocation – which generally hovers around \$600,000 for each Alaska tribe – the winter of 2021, and convincing UA to allow its SBDC to administer Alaska Tribal SSBCI Consortium in 2022. SBDC is similarly administering the State of Alaska's SSBCI allocation.

AFN's Navigators have expended hundreds of hours on helping the Alaska Tribes who are part of the Alaska Tribal SSBCI Consortium return their completed Operating Agreements, which is required to receive the upwards of \$100 million that will come to the Consortium through the SSBCI Program.

In total, 124 Alaska Tribes make up the Alaska Tribal SSBCI Consortium, making the largest consortium in the country and on in which the Biden Administration and the U.S. Department of the Treasury is paying close attention to.

The SSBCI Program is structured to have a multiplier effect on small-business development and growth in Native communities. For every \$1 of SSBCI capital that is utilized, up to \$10 in private investment monies are expected to be catalyzed, amplifying the effects of the funding and providing small businesses with resources for growth, according to U.S. Treasurer (and Mohegan Chief) Lynn Malerba.

Homeowner's Assistance Fund (HAF) - Congress authorized nearly \$10 billion for the HAF Program through ARPA to support homeowners facing financial hardship due to COVID-19. HAF funds were distributed to states, U.S. Territories, and federally recognized Tribes. The Tribal set aside totaled nearly \$500 million. HAF funds could be used to assist with mortgage payments, homeowner's insurance, utility payments, and other specified purposes.

AFN's Navigators worked hard to ensure that Alaska Tribes completed their quarterly and annual reports and HAF plans through emails, calls, webinars, and in person assistance. In total, 27 out of the 33 Alaska Tribes who were behind with compliance are now current thanks to AFN's Navigators.

Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA). Similar to the HAF Program, the ERA Program set aside nearly \$900 million for federally recognized Indian Tribes and Tribally Designated Housing Entities to mitigate the COVID-19 housing crisis by making funding available to assist households that were unable to pay rent or utilities.

AFN Navigators ensured that Alaska Tribes completed their final reports through emails, calls, webinars, and in person assistance. The program ensured that 27 of the 30 Alaska Native Tribes and Native village corporations completed all needed compliance. The Tribal set aside totaled nearly \$900 million.

State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) - The purpose of the SLFRF Program, including its \$20 billion Tribal set-aside, is to provide support to Tribal governments in response to the economic and public health impacts of COVID-19 on their communities, residents, and businesses.

More than 125 Alaska Tribes were behind on their SLFRF reports when AFN's Navigators began turning their attention to bringing these Tribes current. At present, there are 23 Alaska Tribes with outstanding reports. The Treasury Department initially offered an offline reporting option only, however, after Navigators successfully lobbied that many communities lack the broadband to complete the reports online. The YK Regional Navigators utilized the offline report and provided Yup'ik translation to enable completion.

6 Tribes have utilized the offline report with Yupik Translation from AFN Navigators:

- o Native Village of Atmautluak
- o Native Village of Kongiganak
- o Native Village of Eek
- o Native Village of Sleetmute
- o Native Village of Tuluksak
- o Native Village of Ambler

(Continued on page 9)

Navigator (Continued)

As you may recall, it was AFN who convinced the Treasury Department that its initial allocation greatly prejudiced Alaska Tribes and, based on the white paper AFN authored, Treasury reversed its published funding allocation, giving each Tribe a minimum of \$1 million dollars, when most Alaska Tribes would not have received any allocation under the first funding formula. This redirected \$229 million to Alaska Tribes.

Local Assistance and Tribal Consistency Fund (LATCF) -

The purpose of the LATCF Program is to serve as a general revenue enhancement program. Under this Program, recipients have broad discretion on uses of funds, similar to the ways in which they may use funds generated from their own local revenue sources.

Most Alaska Tribes received two allocations of \$25,000 each. However, the larger Tribes received \$50,000 allocations for a total of \$100,000. Alaska Tribes may use these funds on any governmental purpose other than lobbying activity.

Tribes involved in this Program must submit their Obligation and Expenditure Report. AFN Navigators are working with the 20 remaining Alaska Tribes who have outstanding reports. There were 30 Tribes who were behind on their LATCF reports when AFN started devoting time and attention to the matter.

Capital Projects Fund (CPF) - \$9.7million. The CPF Program, administered by the U.S. Department of the Treasury, set aside \$167,504 for tribes to spend on capital projects to better enable work, education, or health monitoring, including remote options like improving broadband connectivity or buying computer equipment.

AFN decided to submit a consortium application because upwards of 50 Alaska Tribal governments lacked the broadband connection or staff capacity to claim their formula allocation in July 2022. The AFN Navigator Program is actively working on the next steps for the AFN Tribal CPF Consortium to deploy these funds.

Fiscal Year 2025 Alaska State Legislative Grant (\$1.5 million). Thanks to strong support of the Alaska Bush Caucus, and Senator Lyman Hoffman and Representative Bryce Edgmon in particular, the Alaska State Capital budget once again included a state appropriation of \$1.5 million for AFN to continue operating its Navigator Program. The Capital Budget has been submitted to Governor Mike Dunleavy, and he has until June 30 to sign or veto certain portions. AFN is closely tracking the Capital Budget and extends our deep appreciation to Senator Hoffman and Representative Edgmon.

Alaska Legislature Update

Alaska Native Inmates Crime Study. At the request of Senator Lyman Hoffman, AFN submitted a state legislative funding request to study the incarceration rate, among other things, of Alaska Native inmates. AFN is similarly tracking Governor Dunleavy's decision to sign or veto that budgetary line item.

Child Welfare Update

Federal ICWA Grant (Focus Sessions) - AFN was asked by a number of Alaska Tribes, the Alaska Office of Children's Services, and the Alaska Court System to apply for a \$2.5 million grant to improve data, training and collaboration between the parties. The Core Team includes leadership from all three of these stakeholders in addition to representatives from Casey Family Programs and AFF. The Core Team meets monthly to determine the grant framework and improve communication between grant stakeholders.

Participating Tribes and Tribal organizations include:

- o Arctic Slope Native Association
- o The Aleut Community of Saint Paul
- o Aleutian Pribilofs Islands Association
- o Chugachmiut
- o Cook Inlet Tribal Council
- o Knik Tribe
- o Sunaq Tribe of Kodiak
- o The Native Village of Eyak
- o Sitka Tribe of Alaska
- o Nome Eskimo Community

The Administrative Team meets weekly to plan and implement grant deliverables set by the core team. Members include:

- o Dr. Jessica Saniguq Ullrich, professor of Social Welfare at Washington State University
- o Francine Eddy Jones, Retired Director of Tribal Family and Youth Services, Central Council Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
- o Rodreshia Dunbar, former Compact Project Officer, State of Alaska
- o Will Kronick, AFN Child Welfare Director

The ICWA grant will be conducting regional focus groups and meetings in the fall and winter to ensure the grant includes culturally and evidenced based practices from feedback from families with child welfare experience. Under the direction of Dr. Ullrich, the project is pursuing Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval and working with Tribes to ensure all safety protocols are established.

U.S. v. Alaska Update

As you know, in May of 2022 the federal government sued the State of Alaska because of the State's interference in federal management of subsistence fishing on the portion of the Kuskokwim River within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge. Under the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA), rural residents fishing for subsistence have a priority over other users of the river. The State of Alaska refused to recognize that rural priority and issued orders conflicting with those issued by the Federal Subsistence Board. In October of 2023, AFN joined the lawsuit to advocate for continued protections for rural people who depend on subsistence fishing.

A Win for the Rural Subsistence Priority

On March 29, 2024, Judge Sharon Gleason of the United States District Court for the District of Alaska ruled that the federal government has the authority to regulate subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim River. In her order, Judge Gleason noted the importance of subsistence fisheries along the Kuskokwim, and that the protection and preservation of a rural subsistence way of life was one of "ANILCA's primary objectives."

Crucially for the rural subsistence priority, Judge Gleason found that the Katie John cases governing subsistence fishing were not invalidated by the Supreme Court's later decision in the Sturgeon case. In fact, Judge Gleason quoted the Supreme Court's Sturgeon opinion stating that the Park Service may regulate subsistence fishing on navigable waters. Judge Gleason also rejected the State's argument that the Federal Subsistence Board was unlawfully created.

Since Judge Gleason found that the United States has authority to regulate subsistence fishing, and rejected the State's arguments to the contrary, the court issued an injunction preventing the State from issuing any orders interfering with federal regulation of subsistence fishing on the Kuskokwim River within the Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge.

What Happens Next?

We expect this case to go all the way up to the Supreme Court. The next step on that road is the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals. The State of Alaska filed its appeal on April 10, 2024, and briefing in that appeal will be completed towards the end of the summer.

Status of House Joint Resolution 22 (HJR 22)

HJR 22, introduced on February 20, 2024, by Representative Thomas Baker (R-District 40), proposed an amendment to the Alaska State Constitution relating to subsistence. On April 26, 2024, an amended version of HJR 22 was introduced. The resolution sought to regain state management authority over fish and wildlife on federal public lands.

The legislative process for HJR 22 has highlighted significant gaps in consultation with affected communities. AFN strongly advocates for a fair and informed decision-making process. It is imperative that both state and federal levels engage in a comprehensive dialogue with rural residents and Alaska Natives to understand the real impact of proposed changes and ensure that our custom and traditional subsistence rights and use are protected.

Background of AFN's Testimony on HJR 22

On March 20, 2024, AFN President Julie Kitka, AFN Subsistence Committee Chair Gayla Hoseth, and Dr. Rosita Worl, a member of the AFN Subsistence Committee, testified before the Alaska House Resources Committee on HJR 22. You can watch this hearing by [clicking here](#). AFN's testimony begins at the 1 hour and 40-minute mark into the hearing.

Key Points from AFN's Testimony

Need for Fact-Finding: AFN encourages the State Legislature to take its time and conduct a comprehensive fact-finding effort to learn more about Alaska Native subsistence rights and use.

Representation of Alaska Native Peoples: HJR 22 lacks direct mention of Alaska Native peoples. AFN believes subsistence should be based not solely on food security but also on the cultural and traditional needs of Alaska Native communities.

Repeal of Non-Subsistence Use Areas: AFN urges the State Legislature to repeal state statutes designating non-subsistence use areas.

Defining a Unified System: AFN calls on the State of Alaska to define what an ideal unified management system would look like.

Transparency on ANILCA Amendments: AFN requests that the State of Alaska and the Legislature be transparent about any proposed amendments to the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) related to HJR 22.



Julie Kitka and Dr. Rosita Worl testifying on HJR 22 on March 20, 2024.

Farm Bill Update

AFN continues to advocate for the expansion and support of the Farm Bill. The Farm Bill authorizes most of the USDA, including forest service, agriculture, and federal nutrition programs, including SNAP, various conservation programs, rural development, and disaster assistance programs.

In April of this year, AFN sent a letter to Secretary Tom Vilsack of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, urging him to support the “Expansion of Pub. L. 93-638 Authority Throughout the Agency.” Expanding 638 Indian Self-Determination contracting and Tribal Self-Governance compacting across the USDA has been the most effective use of federal resources that Alaska Native communities and members rely on, especially in our rural areas.

These programs have proven beneficial when tailored to Alaska’s unique challenges and rural communities. We know firsthand that 638 has consistently proven to be the most cost-effective and efficient approach in administering federally funded programs in Alaska and the lower 48 Indian Country. Congress has recognized the benefits of 638 as well, which is why members have introduced several marker bills expanding 638 to various USDA programs.

These include:

S. 1780 PRIME Meat Processing in Indian Country Act (Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) meat inspection)

S. 2354 the ARCTIC Act (Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, FSIS meat inspections, establishes an Office of Self-Governance)

S. 2489 FDPIR Tribal Food Sovereignty Act of 2023 (FDPIR)

S. 2457 A bill to amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization

Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Self-Governance and for other purposes (Establishes an Office of Self-Governance)

S. 2912/H.R. 5790 SNAP Tribal Food Sovereignty Act of 2023 (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)

AFN urged Secretary Tom Vilsack to support these marker bills, which will greatly improve the delivery of USDA services for our Alaska Native people and communities.

AFN’s Participation in the Farm Bill Coalition Fly-In

In addition to these legislative efforts, Ben Mallott, AFN’s Vice President of External Affairs recently participated in the Native Farm Bill Coalition Fly-In. This event brought together a diverse group of stakeholders from across the nation to advocate for critical updates and expansions within the Farm Bill. The participation of AFN’s leadership highlights our commitment to ensuring that the unique needs of Alaska Native communities are represented and addressed in federal agricultural policies. AFN emphasized the importance of supporting the marker bills that expand 638 authorities, enhancing the effectiveness of USDA programs tailored to Alaska Native needs.



Ben Mallott (left) at the Native Farm Bill Coalition Fly-In.

AFN's 2024 Federal Priorities

AFN shared their 2024 Federal Priorities during the recent Alaska Day events with representatives from congress and the administration. These priorities have been determined based on AFN resolutions and committee actions to ensure they reflect the collective aspirations and needs of our Alaska Native communities. Here is a summary:

1. Alaska Native Subsistence Rights and Use – AFN continues to push federal legislation to amend ANCSA to establish collective subsistence rights for Alaska Natives on both ANCSA and federal lands. AFN is also urging a Presidential Executive Order to create a high-level interagency task force to protect subsistence rights and ensure continuous dialogue with federal agencies.

2. Alaska Native Veterans Allotment Act Improvements – AFN is advocating for amendments to PL 116-09 to extend the application period, expand available land bases, and ensure that qualified veterans and their heirs can access ancestral lands.

3. Public Safety Enhancements – AFN calls for fully funded public safety programs the establishment of non-competitive base funding for PL-280 tribes, and the incorporation of the definition of “village” in public safety statutes to better protect Alaska Native women and communities.

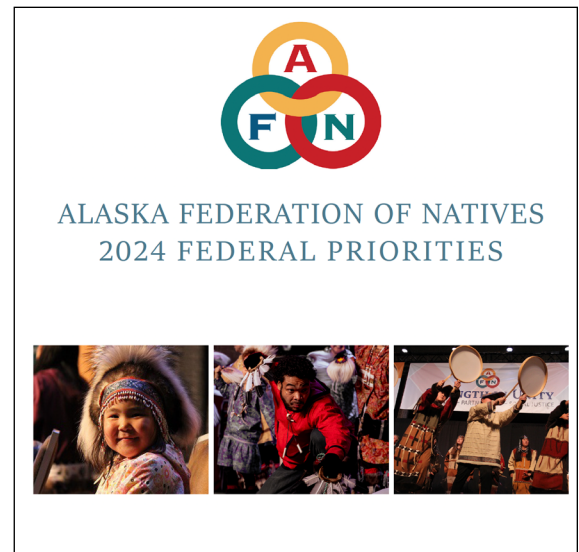
4. Farm Bill Reauthorization Priorities – AFN urges Congress to expand 638 authority throughout the USDA, supporting marker bills that enhance food security and economic opportunities for Alaska Native communities.

5. AFN supports H.R. 6489 and S. 2615 to remove the 14(c)(3) provision, empowering Alaska Native corporations to utilize their lands for economic development.

6. Seaweed Farm Act and National Seafood Supply Act – AFN backs legislation to strengthen Alaska’s fishing and seafood industries, which are vital to our economic and cultural heritage, and the

8. Reliable Postal Services – AFN requests a comprehensive investigation into postal services in rural Alaska to address delays and improve access to essential services.

[Click here](#) to review the entire packet. These priorities represent the collective voice of our membership and the critical issues identified through AFN resolutions and committee actions. Thank you for your continued support and engagement in these vital advocacy efforts.



Click the image above for AFN's 2024 Federal Priorities.

Report on the U.S. UN Ambassador's Visit to the Alaska Native Heritage Center

AFN and the Alaska Native Heritage Center (ANHC) were honored to host a visit by U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, Linda Thomas-Greenfield, during her layover in Anchorage. The Ambassador toured ANHC with ANHC Executive Director Emily Edenshaw and AFN Vice President Ben Mallott.

During her visit, Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield met with participants of the Arctic Indigenous Exchange Program, a new initiative launched by the Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs. This program brought together 14 Indigenous leaders from Greenland, Canada, and Alaska to explore areas of regional collaboration across the North American Arctic.

The visit by Ambassador Thomas-Greenfield and the successful discussion with the Arctic Indigenous Exchange Program reflects the continued efforts of AFN and its partners to promote cultural exchange, regional collaboration, and the empowerment of Indigenous leaders.



Lisa Thomas-Greenfield, Ben Mallott, and Emily Edenshaw (l-r)

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Will Kronick, Director, Indian Child Welfare Initiative

Geoff Toy, Subsistence Legal Fellow