



Alaska Federation of Natives
2014 Legislative & Litigation Committee
Resolution 14-16

TITLE: A CALL TO ACTION ON RURAL GOVERNANCE

WHEREAS: The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 165 federally-recognized tribes, 146 village corporations, 12 regional corporations, and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs; and

WHEREAS: The mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and

WHEREAS: In 1999 Rural Governance and Empowerment Commission submitted recommendations to Governor Knowles; and,

WHEREAS: In 2001, Governor Knowles and tribal leaders signed the Millennium Agreement to recognize tribes in Alaska and provide a framework for cooperation between federally recognized tribes and the State of Alaska. This Agreement has since been left idle by subsequent administrations; and,

WHEREAS: In December 2013, more that 50 committed Alaskans reconvened as the Rural Governance Commission (RGC) to address issues of vital concern to Alaska Native people and rural communities; and

WHEREAS: Reopening the dialogue and reconvening the RGC was initiated and co-hosted by First Alaskans Institute and North Star Group, reflecting the urgency felt by the participants that Alaskans must act to ensure rural communities have the recognition, support and resources they need to survive and thrive; and

WHEREAS: Rural governance remains unfinished business in Alaska; and

WHEREAS: The time is now to urge the state to take positive and aggressive action in support of rural communities;

WHEREAS: The reconvened Alaskans further found the following issues as key to completing the work of the 1999 commission:

- The State of Alaska must clearly and officially recognize tribes as governments and eliminate barriers to tribal governance;

- Alaskans should work to strengthen Alaska Native culture as a way to ensure educational and academic success, and to combat high rates of suicide and crime;
- The State of Alaska should reconfigure state systems to work in support of tribes; and
- The State of Alaska and the federal government should enter into compacting agreements with Alaska Native organizations, including tribes, where appropriate to fill gaps in rural public safety.

WHEREAS: The findings were made publicly available at the annual meeting of the Alaska Municipal League in November of 2014, available on-line at www.ruralgov.org; and

WHEREAS: These findings are meant to spur statewide discourse and urge specific action by our state policy makers to address issues of concern for rural communities in our state;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED: that the Alaska Federation of Natives support and confirm the findings of the reconvened Commission, and urge state leaders to integrate the issues and recommendations identified by the reconvened RGC into public policy, and to take swift action to ensure the health and wellbeing of rural Alaska.

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

Passed on December 8, 2014

