



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GOVERNOR DUNLEAVY REFUSES TO WORK WITH ALASKA TRIBES

Dunleavy administration declining multiple requests for consultation and establishment of government-to-government relations

Anchorage, Alaska – During Governor Dunleavy’s few months in office, he and his administration have already set an alarming precedent by declining to work with Alaska Native Tribes seeking consultation and to establish collaborative government-to-government relations on multiple occasions.

On March 27 and April 5, 2019, Gov. Dunleavy’s administration declined Orutsararmiut Native Council’s request for consultation on the Donlin Gold Mine Project and the establishment of working relations between Dunleavy’s agencies and the Tribes of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Region. The joint letter declining ONC’s request came from the Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Doug Vincent-Lang, Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Corri Feige, and Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Jason Brune. On April 1, 2019, the Chilkat Indian Villages received a letter from Dunleavy’s Commissioner of Natural Resources, Corri Feige, declining their request to establish and outline an official consultation process regarding the Palmer Exploration Project.

Governor Dunleavy’s refusal to work with Alaska Tribes is an alarming reversal of Tribal policy and longstanding State positions backed by numerous Administrative Orders (AO No. 186 by Gov. Knowles and AO No. 300 by Gov. Walker). The refusal to work with Tribes also challenges the recognition and viability of Alaska’s Tribal sovereignty and inherent power to govern our own people and our own lands.

“A working relationship between the Governor’s administration and Tribal agencies is critical to the wellbeing, economic sustainability, and protection of our traditional ways of life. The decisions made by this administration will have lasting effects and directly impact Tribal members who have been stewards of these lands and waters for thousands of years.” said Kendra Kloster, Native Peoples Action Executive Director. *“His blatant refusal to work with Tribes is concerning and goes against what he stated before being elected Governor. As an elected official serving our people and state, we need to hold Governor Dunleavy and his administration accountable in recognizing, restoring, and continuing to improve Tribal relations in Alaska.”*

During Governor Dunleavy’s opening remarks at the 2018 Alaska Federation of Natives Gubernatorial debate, Dunleavy proclaimed, “You’ve got someone that understands what it is to live out there [Rural Alaska], you’re going to have a friend in the Governor’s mansion and I look forward to working with all of you.” His campaign on prosperity for Alaska referencing his experience, time and love for rural Alaska is null if the Governor and his administration refuse to include and engage with Tribal agencies to collectively ensure everyone has a seat and voice in decision-making and processes.

The refusal to work with the Orutsararmiut Native Council and Chilkat Indian Tribes are two examples of Governor Dunleavy’s lack of initiative in developing and implementing plans to consult with Tribes in an ongoing and meaningful basis.

“This shift in treatment of Tribes by the State of Alaska is disheartening. It demonstrates a complete lack of understanding and respect for the first people of Alaska. The Dunleavy Administration is grossly eroding away at the long lasting relationship that has been built between Tribes and the State of Alaska. Governor Dunleavy’s actions are highly detrimental, to all Alaskan’s who value our way of life over corporate interest and outside shareholders who are permitted to extract our public resources and contaminate our lands, waters, food and communities.” said Kimberley Strong, Chilkat Indian Villages Tribal Council President.

It is of NPA’s imperative and critical notion that we hold Governor Dunleavy and his administration accountable in restoring the government-to-government relationship with Alaska Tribes. This includes any actions in developing new rules, policies, directives, or actions that will impact Tribal members. The State of Alaska must recognize Tribes and examine ways to engage Tribal organizations to protect and enhance the health, safety, and wellbeing of Tribal citizens and communities now and in the future. Establishing effective Tribal-State relationships is essential for our people, communities, and ways of life in all areas of Alaska.

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[Native Peoples Action, Inc.](#)

is an Alaska Native non-profit organization. We strive to provide Alaska Native peoples, communities, and our traditional values with a voice at all levels of policy making.

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[Chilkat Indian Villages](#)

a duly constituted Indian Tribe organized pursuant to the Acts of Congress and is the sole governing body of the Tribe as authorized by its Constitution and Bylaws.

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[Orutsararmiut Native Council](#)

is a Federally recognized governing body for the community of Bethel, Alaska whose mission you can learn more about on their website.