



United States Senate Committee on

Energy & Natural Resources



Senator Lisa Murkowski, Alaska, *Chairman*

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CONTACT: [Robert Dillon](#) (Murkowski) 202.224.6977

[Mike Anderson](#) (Sullivan) 202.224.6727

Sens. Murkowski, Sullivan Introduce Legislation to Give Lands Back to Five Southeast Alaska Native Communities

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Sens. Lisa Murkowski and Dan Sullivan, both R-Alaska, today introduced legislation to rectify an injustice done to the Alaska Native residents of five Southeast communities that were prohibited from forming urban Native corporations when the Alaska Native Lands Claim Settlement Act (ANCSA) was passed in 1971.

The **Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act** would provide Alaska Native residents of Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Tenakee and Haines the same 23,000 acre granted to other Alaska Natives communities in Southeast under ANCSA.

“Unfortunately, 44 years have passed and the Native people of these five ‘landless communities’ are still waiting to receive the same benefits granted to the rest of Alaska Natives under ANCSA,” **Sen. Murkowski** said. “The legislation we are introducing today is an important step toward ensuring that the Native residents of these communities are made whole.”

“This legislation would right the wrong of excluding Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Tenakee and Haines from forming village or urban corporations under ANCSA,” **Sen. Sullivan** said. “This effort has been long in the making and I am dedicated to working with all stakeholders to ensure that justice is served.”

ANCSA settled Alaska Native land claims in exchange for \$966 million and 44 million acres of land issued to 13 regional corporations and more than 200 village or urban corporations. However, Alaska Natives in Ketchikan, Wrangell, Petersburg, Tenakee and Haines were not allowed to form urban corporations and therefore were ineligible for the town site lands. The legislation introduced today by Murkowski and Sullivan would rectify that oversight.

The legislation would permit the formation of local Alaska Native urban corporations in each of the five communities so that they could each receive title to the surface rights to 23,000 acres. Subsurface rights to ANCSA lands went to the larger regional corporations created under the 1971 law.

A 1994 [study](#) by the University of Alaska’s Institute of Social and Economic Research found that the five communities should have qualified under ANCSA for local corporation status.

The Unrecognized Southeast Alaska Native Communities Recognition and Compensation Act is available on the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee [website](#).

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