Tanana Chiefs Conference

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November 9, 2026

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, D.C. 20510

Re: Urgent Follow-Up on S. 5653 and Tribal Consultation

Dear Senator Murkowski:

I am writing on behalf of Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) and our Tribes to briefly follow up on our letter last week regarding S. 5653, the Bipartisan American Affordability and Jobs Act. In that letter, TCC also expressed its support for the resolution adopted by Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) delegates calling on Congress to protect Tribal sovereignty and withdraw Title III from the bill.

Since our letter, the release of a manager's amendment and the Senate's consideration of the bill later today have only increased the urgency of these concerns. Unfortunately, the changes do not go far enough to address the impact of Title III on Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. For Alaska Native people, Section 106 is more than a permitting requirement. It ensures our Tribes have a meaningful voice when decisions may affect our traditional lands, sacred places, burial sites, and cultural resources.

We recently saw why these protections matter when Chilkat Indian Village (Klukwan) shared its experience with the Haines Highway reconstruction. When ancestral remains were uncovered, Section 106 consultation ensured the Tribe had a voice in protecting its ancestors while allowing the larger project to continue. That experience shows why meaningful Tribal consultation must be protected, not weakened. Congress should not make significant changes to Section 106 without first hearing directly from Tribes whose lands, cultural resources, and people will be affected. Decisions of this importance should not be made without Tribes at the table.

As Chairman of the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs, you are in a unique position to protect that voice. We respectfully ask that you:

1. Lead a bipartisan amendment to strike Title III (Historic Preservation) from S. 5653 before the bill reaches the floor.
2. Insist that any change to Tribal consultation under the National Historic Preservation Act come before the Committee on Indian Affairs, with a hearing at which Tribal Nations can testify.
3. Vote no on cloture on the motion to proceed, now scheduled for November 9, if Title III remains in the bill.

4. Consult with Alaska Tribal leaders, Alaska Native Corporation leaders, and Tribal leaders from across the country to hear directly how these changes, or any proposed amendments, would affect our communities.

As development decisions move forward across Alaska, the voices of our Tribes must remain part of that process. Alaska Native people have cared for these lands for thousands of years, and our Tribes must continue to have a meaningful voice in decisions that may affect our ancestors, traditional lands, sacred places, and cultural resources. These protections are not barriers to progress. They ensure that decisions affecting our lands respect Tribal sovereignty and the places that have sustained our people for generations.

With the Senate preparing to act today, we ask you to stand with Alaska Tribes and the position supported by AFN delegates by helping remove Title III. If these provisions remain, we respectfully ask you to oppose cloture on the motion to proceed.

Thank you for your longstanding work with Alaska Native people and for your consideration of this urgent request. We hope we can count on your leadership.

Sincerely,



Sharon Hildebrand
Chief/Chairman