

October 28, 2009

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
709 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mark Begich
United States Senate
144 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Don Young
U.S. House of Representatives
2111 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Senator Murkowski, Senator Begich, and Congressman Young:


The Land Trust Alliance is a national conservation organization representing more than 1,200 nonprofit organizations that work with private landowners to achieve on-the-ground conservation. On behalf of the Alliance, I am writing in support of S. 1673 and H.R. 3568 and to thank you for your leadership in introducing this legislation. These bills, by making the conservation easement tax incentive now available to individual farmers and ranchers also apply to Alaska native corporations, would provide them with an important tool for the conservation of fish and wildlife habitats on their lands.

Nearly 44 million acres of land was conveyed to Alaska Native Corporations under the Alaska Natives Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA). This land, and the wildlife it supports, is critical to conserving the traditional ways and subsistence lifestyle of many Alaskans. In many instances, this habitat is nationally and even internationally important.

We have been delighted to learn of the interest of Tyonek Native Corporation, and perhaps other native corporations, in using conservation easements to protect important natural resources in a manner that is consistent with their responsibility to their shareholders, and believe it is entirely appropriate for them to receive the same tax treatment as farmers, ranchers and working forest land owners in the lower 48.

The Land Trust Alliance strongly supports S. 1673 and H.R. 3568. Thank you again for your leadership in this important natural resource issue.

Sincerely,



Russell Shay
Director of Public Policy

cc: Alaska land trusts