

TESTIMONY OF ANDY TEUBER
CHAIRMAN AND PRESIDENT, ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES COMMITTEE ON NATURAL RESOURCES
SUBCOMMITTEE FOR INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF THE UNITED STATES
“LEGISLATIVE HEARING ON HR 7119”
JULY 22, 2020

Good afternoon Chairman Gallego, Ranking Member Cook, Congressman Young and members of the Subcommittee. My name is Andy Teuber, I am the Chairman and President of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of H.R. 7119—the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Land Transfer Act of 2020.

ANTHC is a statewide tribal health organization that serves all 229 tribes and more than 178,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people in Alaska. ANTHC and Southcentral Foundation co-manage the Alaska Native Medical Center, the tertiary care hospital for all Alaska Natives and American Indians in Alaska. ANTHC also provides statewide health services, including construction and operational support for rural sanitation projects, and technical assistance to other tribal health organizations for the maintenance and repair of regional hospitals and clinics including construction of new facilities.

If enacted, H.R. 7119, would transfer two parcels of land, which are located in an industrial area of downtown Anchorage, from the Indian Health Service to the Consortium via warranty deed, so that the Consortium can more efficiently use the properties. Currently, our Division of Environmental Health and Engineering uses the properties for a variety of purposes to support the mission of ANTHC of providing the highest quality health services in partnership with our people and the Alaska Native Tribal Health System.

The “upper lot” is just over 2 acres and has two buildings on it which were built in 1974. The largest wood frame building is a 4,400 sq. ft. warehouse previously used for equipment maintenance, storage, and a couple of offices. It is currently used as a transitional warehouse for materials, supplies, and equipment support for sanitation projects in over 180 communities in rural Alaska. The second wood frame building is a 2,304 sq. ft. structure which houses an electrical/plumbing fabrication shop. This facility is primarily used to build and maintain control panels for water and utility plants in rural Alaska communities. The upper lot also provides space for approximately 20 shipping containers which are used for storage of surplus construction supplies which may be used on future projects

The “lower lot” is approximately 1.5 acres and does not have any permanent structures on the property. The property provides logistical space for 40 to 50 shipping containers which are unloaded and loaded for shipping to project sites, along with space to maintain heavy equipment in between being shipped in and out of rural Alaska villages for sanitation projects. This lower lot has been essential during this pandemic for us to receive, store and distribute hand sanitizer to rural communities that do not have adequate access to in-home water.

The properties were used to support two recently completed projects, one in the village of Ambler and the other in Kivalina. For the Ambler bio-mass project we completed construction of four modular shipping containers which were staged in the lower lot and shipped to the community from

there. We also sent six shipping containers containing our portable alternative sanitation systems to Kivalina, which will be installed in homes in 45 homes in the community that are currently unserved.

Currently we have nine other active sanitation projects throughout Alaska being supported from these properties in 2020. These projects are in the communities of Akiachack, Kiana, Klawock, Elim, Lower Kalskag, Shishmaref, Port Graham, Tatitlek and Eek.

The properties at issue in the bill are a valuable tool for us in providing health service to our people throughout the state. However, there are only a couple outdated improvements on the properties. And the Consortium would like to improve the properties in order to better utilize them to support our mission. Obtaining warranty deeds for the properties before making improvements, would allow us to, both, ensure ownership of any improvements and to obtain the financing needed for such improvements.

I respectfully request favorable consideration of H.R. 7119, the “Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium Land Transfer Act of 2020,” which, if passed, will improve the Consortium’s ability to successfully continue to fulfill the federal government’s trust responsibility of providing for the current and future health care needs of Alaska Native and American Indian people throughout Alaska. I would welcome any questions that the members of the committee might have. Thank you for your time.