

Talking Points for Congressman Begich – Cape Fox Land Entitlement Finalization Act of 2025 (H.R. 2815)

Setting the Stage: Why Land Matters in Alaska

- Land is at the heart of Alaska’s future—our ability to develop resources, build infrastructure, grow communities, and generate local opportunity all starts with access to land.
 - Unfortunately, land exchanges, selections, and conveyances in Alaska have historically been fraught with red tape, delays, and federal constraints. Many Alaska Native Corporations were saddled with unusable or economically stranded parcels due to topography, regulatory overlays, or proximity restrictions.
 - That’s why legislation like H.R. 2815 is so important: it cuts through bureaucratic barriers to correct longstanding inequities and unlock real potential for economic development in our communities.
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Key Points on H.R. 2815

1. Finalizing a Long-Delayed Entitlement:

- Cape Fox Corporation, representing the Alaska Native village of Saxman, is the last Southeast Alaska village corporation still awaiting full satisfaction of its ANCSA entitlement.
- This bill authorizes a land exchange with the U.S. Forest Service for approximately 180 acres that will connect two existing Cape Fox parcels—land that is contiguous, strategic, and economically **useful**.

2. Fixing a Unique Inequity:

- Cape Fox was uniquely burdened by a restriction prohibiting selections within six miles of Ketchikan—limiting its options to steep, rocky, or isolated lands.

- This exchange finally remedies that disparity and gives Cape Fox the opportunity other Southeast village corporations have already received.

3. Infrastructure and Energy Benefits:

- The land will facilitate development of a transportation and power corridor, improving access between Mahoney Lake and the Beaver Falls Power Grid.
- That connection is crucial to Cape Fox's plans for a renewable hydropower project and will support winter access to tourism facilities and subsistence areas.

4. Supporting Local Economic Growth:

- Beyond energy, this access corridor opens the door to expanded tourism, marine services, and local job creation—sectors vital to Ketchikan and Southeast Alaska.
- Letters of support from local governments, utilities, and businesses reflect a strong consensus that this land exchange is in the public interest.

5. Respecting Tribal Sovereignty and ANCSA Intent:

- This bill honors the original promise of ANCSA—land in exchange for extinguished claims—by ensuring Cape Fox can actually use and benefit from its settlement lands.
- It advances self-determination and economic opportunity in a way that's consistent with both the law and the conservative principle of empowering local communities.

6. Closing Points

- H.R. 2815 is not about expanding government—it's about finishing what Congress started over 50 years ago under ANCSA, and finally delivering on a promise made to the people of Saxman.

- It's a commonsense, locally supported solution that promotes development, respects Alaska's unique geography, and empowers an Alaska Native Corporation to thrive on its own terms.
- I urge my colleagues to support this long-overdue legislation and help unlock new opportunity for Southeast Alaska.