



Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District
14896 Kenai Spur Hwy - Kenai AK 99611
(907) 283-3335 www.kpedd.org

Leadership to enhance, foster and promote economic development

August 28th, 2025

Dear Sen. Murkowski, Sen. Sullivan, and Representative Begich:

Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District would like to support the Chugach Alaska Land Exchange Oil Spill Recovery Act (S.2016 and H.R. 3903) which was recently introduced by Alaska's congressional delegation in the 119th Congress and is designed to resolve decades-old split-estate conflicts while delivering lasting benefits to all Alaskans.

For years, Chugach Alaska Corporation (Chugach) and the people in this region have faced barriers to effectively managing and benefiting from their lands. The split-estate issues stem from the use of Exxon Valdez Oil Spill (EVOS) Trustee Council settlement funds, which led to the federal and state governments acquiring surface rights and well-intentioned conservation easements, while Chugach retained subsurface rights. This has resulted in a complex arrangement which has increased costs to develop mineral resources while conflicting with the intent of the lands purchased for conservation purposes.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was meant to bring together Village and Regional Corporations, granting surface rights to the former and subsurface rights to the latter. But EVOS-funded land acquisitions disrupted this balance, creating confusion and hindering both economic development and cultural stewardship.

If enacted, the proposed legislation would allow Chugach to receive approximately 65,000 acres of full-estate land that are vital to their culture, economy, and accessibility. These are lands identified for potential timber, tourism, transportation, and cultural significance. In exchange, Chugach would transfer ownership of over 230,000 acres of subsurface estate to the federal government, aligning ownership and reducing management conflicts.

This exchange is more than an administrative correction, it is an opportunity for healing, fairness, and forward progress. It will correct historic imbalances, enable Chugach to manage lands for the benefit of shareholders, as ANCSA intended, and contribute to the greater good of Alaska Native communities and all Alaskans.



Economic Development District (EDD)
The U.S. Department of Commerce, Economic
Development Administration (EDA) Recognized
KPEDD as an EDD in 1988



Alaska Regional Development Organization (ARDOR)
The State of Alaska Department of Commerce,
Community and Economic Development certified
KPEDD as an ARDOR in 1989

We request your support for this bill and thank you for considering this important legislation which will support economic development in the Chugach region.

Sincerely,



Cassidi Cameron, Executive Director
Kenai Peninsula Economic Development District
cassidi@kpedd.org



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August 29, 2025

The Honorable Nick Begich III
U.S. House of Representatives
153 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20515

Dear Representative Begich,

On behalf of the PWS Economic Development District, I am writing to support the *Chugach Alaska Land Exchange Oil Spill Recovery Act* (S.2016 and H.R. 3903) which you recently introduced in the 119th Congress. We appreciate the effort to resolve decades-old split-estate conflicts while delivering lasting benefits to all Alaskans.

As you know, for years, Chugach Alaska Corporation (Chugach) and the people in this region have faced barriers to effectively managing and benefiting from their lands. The split-estate issues stem from the use of *Exxon Valdez Oil Spill* (EVOS) Trustee Council settlement funds, which led to the federal and state governments acquiring surface rights and well-intentioned conservation easements, while Chugach retained subsurface rights. This has resulted in a complex arrangement which has increased costs to develop mineral resources while conflicting with the intent of the lands purchased for conservation purposes.

The Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) was meant to bring together Village and Regional Corporations, granting surface rights to the former and subsurface rights to the latter. But EVOS-funded land acquisitions disrupted this balance, creating confusion and hindering both economic development and cultural stewardship.

If enacted, the proposed legislation would allow Chugach to receive approximately 65,000 acres of full-estate land that are vital to their culture, economy, and accessibility. These are lands identified for potential timber, tourism, transportation, and cultural significance. In exchange, Chugach would transfer ownership of over 230,000 acres of subsurface estate to the federal government, aligning ownership and reducing management conflicts.

This exchange is more than an administrative correction, it is an opportunity for healing, fairness, and forward progress. It will correct historic imbalances, enable Chugach to manage lands for the benefit of shareholders, as ANCSA intended, and contribute to the greater good of Alaska Native communities and all Alaskans.

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We want to register our full support for this legislation and thank you for sponsoring this important bill which will support economic development in the Chugach region.

Sincerely,



Kristin Smith
Executive Director

