



October 2, 2026

The Honorable Jeff Hurd
Chairman
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
Committee on Natural Resources
U.S. House of Representatives
1324 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Re: Responses to Questions for the Record Regarding H.R. 8674, the “Geese House Site Conveyance Act”

Dear Chairman Hurd:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before the Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs at the September 17, 2026, legislative hearing on H.R. 8674, the “Geese House Site Conveyance Act.” On behalf of Doyon, Limited, I appreciate the Subcommittee’s attention to this narrowly tailored legislation, which would complete a long-pending Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) conveyance and return the historic Geese House site—an ancestral place of deep cultural and spiritual importance to Alaska Native people of Interior Alaska—to Doyon’s care. Doyon respectfully submits the following responses to the additional questions for the record.

Responses to Questions from Chairman Westerman

1. How does this bill fulfill the U.S.’s commitment to Alaska Natives?

By directing the conveyance of the Geese House site to Doyon, H.R. 8674 would further ANCSA’s purposes by helping complete a portion of Doyon’s remaining entitlement under the more than 50 year-old land claims settlement and also honoring the continuing relationship between Alaska Native people, their ancestral lands, and the federal government.

ANCSA, enacted by Congress in 1971, established a distinctive settlement of Alaska Native land claims by creating Alaska Native-owned regional and village corporations to receive and manage land and monetary compensation for the benefit of those shareholders enrolled as owners of those corporations. As part of that settlement, the United States committed to transfer from public lands, approximately 44 million acres to Alaska Native corporations. Doyon’s entitlement exceeds 12 million acres across Interior Alaska, yet hundreds of thousands of acres remain unconveyed more than five decades after ANCSA’s enactment.

Doyon selected the Geese House site in 1978 as part of its ANCSA entitlement, but the lands at and around the site were never conveyed, and their subsequent inclusion within Denali National Park and Preserve created obstacles to completing the transfer. The passage of H.R. 8674 will resolve those obstacles and authorize the conveyance, with the acreage counting against Doyon's remaining ANCSA entitlement. The Geese House Site Conveyance Act would provide for the return of this sacred site to the Native people of the Doyon Region, enabling Doyon to restore, protect, and maintain this culturally important site for the use and benefit of current and future generations of its Alaska Native shareholders.

Geese House is a natural geological feature of deep cultural and spiritual significance to Athabascan people and is central to oral traditions in the Upper Kantishna region. Returning the site to Doyon's care would help fulfill the United States' longstanding commitment to Alaska Natives under ANCSA and help safeguard an ancestral place of enduring importance.

2. What support has Doyon received from Alaska Village Corporations, Alaska Native leaders, and other ANCs for conveying the Geese House site?

Doyon has received significant support for this effort to obtain the conveyance of Geese House from Tribes, Village Corporations, Alaska Native leaders, and individual culture bearers connected to the Doyon Region and the Geese House site.

Doyon's effort to obtain conveyance of the Geese House site is broadly supported by Alaska Native tribes and Native organizations in the region, reflecting the shared view that Geese House is part of the cultural heritage of the Native people of the Doyon region and should be returned to Native stewardship. Working in partnership with the National Park Service (NPS), Doyon engaged in meaningful consultation with Tribes in the region.

Many local Tribes and Village Corporations in the region have adopted resolutions of support for the conveyance of the Geese House site to Doyon and the legislation, including: Lake Minchumina Traditional Council; Bean Ridge Village Corporation (the Village Corporation for Manley Hot Springs); Beaver Kwit'chin Village Corporation (the Village Corporation for Beaver Village); Nenana Native Association; Mendas Cha-ag Native Corporation (the Village Corporation for Healy Lake); Native Village of Minto; Ruby Tribal Council; and the full board of directors of the Tanana Chiefs Conference (an Alaska Native tribal consortium including 39 villages and 37 federally recognized Tribes, whose mission is to provide a "unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development, and culture of the Interior Alaska Native people"). These resolutions are provided along with this written response. As stated in my testimony, Doyon very much appreciates the Tribes', Village Corporations', and other organizations' widespread support for the legislation and for conveyance of Geese House to Doyon.

Doyon's support is also grounded in the work of Elders and community leaders who identified and documented the significance of Geese House decades ago. Alfred Starr, Sr. of Nenana identified Geese House as an important site, and Hank Ketzler Sr. of Nenana and Al Starr Sr. of Tanana visited the site in 1982 as Doyon Elder representatives in coordination

with NPS. More recently, Doyon has continued to hear from culture bearers and community members that Geese House remains a place of deep and sacred significance to Interior Alaska Native people.

3. Could you explain the level of cooperation and consultation Doyon had with the National Park Service while working on this land conveyance?

Doyon and NPS have worked cooperatively and constructively on issues relating to the Geese House site. Throughout the Biden Administration and early in the second Trump Administration, Doyon worked with NPS, Bureau of Land Management, and Department of the Interior officials to advance the conveyance of the Geese House site to Doyon. It was these discussions that led to the mutual determination for a legislative approach to address the identified obstacles to administrative action and direct the conveyance.

NPS also has facilitated visits to the site, including most recently in 2024. In 1982, Doyon Elder representatives visited Geese House in coordination with NPS. In June 2024, NPS facilitated a more recent visit to the site with the Superintendent of Denali National Park and Preserve and other NPS representatives, marking the first time Doyon representatives had been able to reach the site since the 1982 visit.

Doyon and NPS have engaged in Tribal consultation with Athabascan Tribes across Interior Alaska regarding the future of the site. Doyon's written testimony expressed gratitude to NPS for this cooperative effort and noted that NPS involvement helped make it possible to advance the legislation.

The Department of the Interior also has testified in support of the identical Senate companion bill, S. 4399, recognizing that the bill advances the goal of fulfilling "critical protection and stewardship responsibilities" for the site "by providing a clear legal framework for the conveyance and safeguarding its cultural values through prohibitions on incompatible development and protections aligned with ANCSA." In addition, this formal statement on the record, Doyon has received more informal expressions of support from individual NPS personnel familiar with the site and the importance of the proposed conveyance.

While the ultimate conveyance now requires congressional action, Doyon appreciates the professional and respectful engagement it has had with NPS throughout this process.

4. The record shows at least two administrative attempts to complete this conveyance outside of Congress, including recent discussions with then-Secretary Haaland's Interior Department. Why did those administrative paths not succeed, and why is legislation now the only available mechanism to complete this conveyance?

Administrative paths have not succeeded because the Geese House lands are now within the Preserve area of Denali National Park and Preserve and are subject to federal land management and withdrawal constraints that prevent the Department of the Interior from completing the conveyance through ordinary administrative processing. Doyon selected the lands in 1978, before the lands were added to the Preserve area of Denali National Park and Preserve through the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) in

1980. Although Doyon and the agencies continued to work to try to advance the conveyance through administrative means, it eventually became clear that inclusion of the lands in the expanded Park and Preserve entangled the conveyance in restrictions that ultimately could not be resolved through routine administrative action. While there was a secondary issue identified under the ANCSA regulations, those regulations are known to be inconsistent with the statutory requirements and were waivable in any event. As noted below, inclusion of the lands in the Preserve area of Denali National Park and Preserve has been the main factor inhibiting conveyance and the primary reason for a legislative solution.

Up through last year, Doyon continued to work in good faith with the Department of the Interior, BLM, and NPS to explore administrative options. Those discussions confirmed that legislation is necessary to authorize the conveyance, address the relationship between the selected lands and Denali National Park and Preserve, reserve required public easements, adjust the park boundary, and impose Congress's chosen restrictions on alienation, mining, and development to ensure the site's cultural value is protected. H.R. 8674 is therefore the appropriate and necessary mechanism to complete the conveyance.

5. Has the inclusion of the lands in Denali National Park and Preserve been the main inhibiting factor preventing Doyon from conveying the Geese House site?

Yes. The inclusion of the selected lands within Denali National Park and Preserve has been the primary factor preventing completion of the conveyance. Doyon selected the Geese House lands in 1978 as part of its ANCSA entitlement. The lands were not originally within Denali National Park and Preserve, but ANILCA later added them to the Preserve area of the expanded Park in 1980. Since then, the lands have remained under NPS management even though they are adjacent to other lands conveyed to Doyon under ANCSA in July 2002.

That later inclusion created legal and administrative obstacles that have prevented the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Department of the Interior from completing the conveyance through the ordinary ANCSA land transfer process. H.R. 8674 addresses that obstacle by directing the conveyance, excluding specified lands and lakebeds, requiring reservation of section 17(b) easements, adjusting the boundary of Denali National Park and Preserve, and applying restrictions that ensure Doyon's stewardship remains focused on protecting the site's cultural significance.

6. Section 2(c) of the bill requires the Secretary to reserve public easements under Section 17(b) of ANCSA on the conveyed land. Would this impact land access for local subsistence users?

No. The reservation of public easements under section 17(b) of ANCSA should not diminish land access for local subsistence users. Section 2(c) of the bill preserves the established ANCSA mechanism for reserving public easements across conveyed lands where required. Those easements are designed to preserve access across Native corporation lands as part of the ANCSA conveyance process, not to eliminate existing lawful access. The bill also makes the conveyance subject to valid existing rights, further confirming that existing rights are preserved. Moreover, the lands that would be conveyed under the bill are

generally not used for subsistence purposes, due to their inaccessibility and subsistence resource potential.

a. Can you confirm that this legislation does not diminish any existing rights of access?

Yes. As is true of any ANCSA conveyance from the United States to an Alaska Native corporation, the legislation would result in the transfer of the United States' right, title, and interest in the conveyed lands to the corporation, a private entity; following the conveyance, the conveyed lands would no longer be federal public land, but rather private land. Under the legislation, however, the conveyance is expressly subject to valid existing rights, and the Secretary is directed to reserve public easements required under section 17(b) of ANCSA. Doyon understands and supports these provisions as part of the conveyance.

Thank you again for the opportunity to testify and to respond to the Subcommittee's additional questions. H.R. 8674 is a focused and appropriate legislative solution to a unique circumstance: lands selected by Doyon nearly fifty years ago, before their later inclusion within Denali National Park and Preserve, remain unconveyed despite their recognized cultural and historic significance. The bill would count the conveyed acreage against Doyon's existing ANCSA entitlement and would help reduce—not expand—the remaining balance of congressionally promised lands that have yet to be conveyed. Passage of this bill would not create a broad precedent or diminish existing rights of access; rather, it would complete an unfinished ANCSA conveyance while preserving valid existing rights, reserving required public easements, and ensuring that Geese House is protected in a manner consistent with its importance to Alaska Native people. Doyon appreciates your leadership, the Subcommittee's consideration, and the continued opportunity to work with Congress, the Department of the Interior, NPS, Tribes, and Alaska Native communities to restore Native ownership of the Geese House site for the cultural and spiritual benefit of current and future generations.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sarah E. Obed". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sarah E. Obed
Senior Vice President, External Affairs
Doyon, Limited