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May 27, 2010

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The Honorable Daniel K. Inouye
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Thad Cochran
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
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Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Diane Feinstein
Chairman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Lamar Alexander
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
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United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Inouye, Ranking Member Cochran, Chairman Feinstein, and Ranking Member Alexander:

As you finalize the Fiscal Year 2011 Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies spending bill, I respectfully request that you include the following provision in the legislation that preserves the Indian healthcare delivery system in the State of Alaska:

Section _____. (a) Notwithstanding any other provision of law and until October 1, 2011, the Indian Health Service may not disburse funds for the provision of health care services pursuant to Public Law 93-638 (25 U.S.C. 450 et seq.) to any Alaska Native village or Alaska Native village corporation that is located within the area served by an Alaska Native regional health entity. (b) Nothing in this section shall be construed to prohibit the disbursement of funds to any Alaska Native village or Alaska Native village corporation under any contract or compact entered into prior to May 1, 2006, or to prohibit the renewal of any such agreement. (c) For the purpose of this section, Eastern Aleutian Tribes, Inc., the Council of Athabascan Tribal Governments, and the Native Village of Eyak shall be treated as Alaska Native regional health entities to which funds may be disbursed under this section.

For at least 10 years, the Congress has included the above language in the Department of Interior, Environment, and Related Agencies spending bill, however, the Administration in its FY2011 Department of Health and Human Services Indian Health Service Justification of Estimates for Appropriations Committees requested the language be struck. Alaska has a long history of providing comprehensive health care to Native people spread across huge tracts of land using regional Native organizations run by Boards of Directors representing villages served. With 231 federally-recognized tribes in Alaska, permitting individual villages to remove scarce

Indian Health Service funds from a regional Alaska Native health organization would lead to a diminution of vitally necessary health services for all Alaska Natives serviced by that regional health Native organization.

I urge you to again include this language, and thank you for your attention to this request.

Sincerely,



Senator Lisa Murkowski