

PRESS RELEASE

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Allakaket Tribal Council and Huslia Tribal Council Vote Unanimously to Withdraw from Ambler Access Litigation

February 16, 2023 (Allakaket & Huslia, Alaska) – Allakaket Tribal Council and Huslia Tribal Council have voted unanimously to withdraw from the Ambler Access Project lawsuit.

The two tribal councils convened and respectively voted unanimously to withdraw from a lawsuit challenging the Ambler Access Project Final Environmental Impact Statement and Joint Record of Decision. The lawsuit was originally filed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference and several tribes against the Department of Interior in 2020.

“Our council and community have considered the both the concerns and potential benefits from the responsible development of our lands. We believe it’s important to recognize that we now walk in two worlds – continuing to respect and value our culture and subsistence lifestyles while also embracing the opportunity for economic growth and stability for our people through higher education and jobs”, said Second Chief Gordon Bergman of the Allakaket Village Council. “It is important that we begin a productive dialogue with the project proponents and have our voices heard during this process.”

Chief Carl Burgett of Huslia said, “The Ambler Access Project and the development of the Ambler Mining District has the potential to provide not only jobs, but also the critical minerals necessary for our national security. We should not depend on foreign sources of these minerals when they can be developed more responsibly on our lands, to the benefit of our people and the entire nation.”

The councils agree that beginning constructive conversations with the project proponents and the federal agencies overseeing the project will not only be beneficial to our communities, but it also demonstrates our commitment to ensuring responsible development of our lands. Having voices that represent the communities is critical in bringing both subsistence needs and Traditional Knowledge to the forefront of the project and providing opportunities for our people.

It is also important to recognize the leadership of our state's Governor Mike Dunleavy, who visited our communities last summer. This was the beginning of several productive conversations with him and amongst our tribal & community members.

As we begin this new chapter, we also reflect on our state's history and ANILCA, a federal law that sought to balance the state's natural resource-based economy with environmental protection and preservation of Alaska's unique ways of life. The councils recognize the value in honoring the intent of this law and by being part of discussions as the project advances, we will ensure our values, culture, and way of life is preserved.

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