

# ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

Thaddeus Tikiun Jr., Chairperson | Vivian Korthuis, CEO | AVCP.org



## Administration

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December 23, 2019

Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs  
Office of the Secretary  
United States Department of the Interior  
Washington, DC 20240

RE: Veterans Native Allotments- Section 1119, Public Law 116-9

Dear Assistant Secretary Sweeney,

Thank you for allowing us to comment on the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation Management Act of March 12, 2019, Public Law 116-9, which will provide Native Allotments for Alaska Native Veterans who have served between August 5, 1964- December 31, 1971.

AVCP is the largest Tribal consortium in the Nation, with 56 federally recognized Tribes as members. Our Region spans approximately 55,000 square miles and is roughly the size of the State of New York with a population of approximately 25,000 residents spread among 48 villages along the Kuskokwim River, Yukon River, and the Bering Sea Coast. AVCP's mission is to provide community development, education, social services, culturally relevant programs, and advocacy for the people and Tribes of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta (YK-Delta).

AVCP's Realty Department provides services to individual restricted landowners in accordance with legal principles and standards governing the performance of trust functions. This includes handling various matters, both now and in the future, for Alaska Native Veterans pursuant to Public Law 116-9.

Therefore, please consider the following recommendations:

- Land selections available for the Native Allotments will be very limited because selection of lands as we understand will be only from available BLM lands. Other federal lands such as Yukon Kuskokwim Fish and Wildlife Refuge should be eligible lands for Veterans to apply for Native Allotments.

Nunaput umyuallgutkut pinirluteng-llu, Tegganerput qigcikliki pirpakluki-llu, ayagyuput-llu ciuliqagcimaut yuuyaraq.  
Our Tribes are united and strong, our Elders are respected and valued, and our youth are guided by Yuuyaraq.

Akiachak, Akiak, Alakanuk, Andreafski, Aniak, Atmautluak, Bethel, Bill Moore's Sl., Cheforak, Chevak, Chuathbaluk, Chuloonawick, Crooked Creek, Eek, Emmonak, Georgetown, Goodnews Bay, Hamilton, Hooper Bay, Lower Kalskag, Upper Kalskag, Kasigluk, Kipnuk, Kongiganak, Kotlik, Kwethluk, Kwigillingok, Lime Village, Marshall, Mekoryuk, Mtn. Village, Napaimute, Napakiak, Napaskiak, Newtok, Nightmute, Nunakauyak, Nunam Iqua, Nunapitchuk, Ohogamiut, Oscarville, Paimiut, Pilot Station, Pitka's Point, Platinum, Quinhagak, Red Devil, Russian Mission, Scammon Bay, Sleetmute, St. Mary's, Stony River, Tuluksak, Tuntutuliak, Tununak, Umkumiut

- Service providers such as Association of Village Council Presidents Realty Department will be unable to handle the overflow of Probates once the Lands are approved for the Veterans. Service Providers should have increased funding added to their compact funding in the very near future to handle this overflow of work we anticipate to come. AVCP has provided the BIA with a proposed budget to fund this anticipated work.
- Applications for submittals returned to the applicants due to incorrect land descriptions or other technical errors on the application must be returned to the BLM within 60 days. Due to the delay in mail service in the rural areas of the State of Alaska, this 60-day period should be increased to 90 days.
- We request that you urge the State of Alaska to allow Veterans to seek allotments on State land and to provide maps indicating land available for selection.
- Village and Regional Corporations allowing selections to be approved on their lands should be allowed to select replacement lands on federal lands.
- We request that land selections in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Region be limited to qualified Veterans enrolled in or eligible for enrollment in a Tribe in the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta Region. As of today, there are only 3 areas open for land selection in Alaska for qualified veterans opened by BLM: 1. Goodnews Bay; 2. 40 miles; 3. Bering Glacier. This influx of land acquired from veterans from other regions will restrict local subsistence users of the land that have provided for their survival for hundreds of years at Charvan Bay (Goodnews Bay).
- Congress should reconsider opening lands to Alaska Vietnam Veterans Allotment Act P.L. 116-9, Sec. 1119 in the Tongass National Forest to prevent those veterans from Southeast Alaska to seek land outside their region.

Once again, thank you for allowing us to comment and we look forward to providing assistance to our Veterans in our region.

Sincerely,

ASSOCIATION OF VILLAGE COUNCIL PRESIDENTS



Vivian Korthius,  
Chief Executive Officer

cc: Andrew Guy, President/CEO, Calista Corporation