



CENTRAL COUNCIL
Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska
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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

No Appeal from State of Alaska in Land-into-Trust Case *Huge Win for Alaska Tribes*

JUNEAU, AK (August 16, 2016) – After a decade of litigation, the State of Alaska has announced it will not seek further appeal in the *Akiachak Native Community v. State of Alaska*. The State’s decision followed a landmark ruling issued in June 2016 by the United States Court of Appeals for the DC Circuit that rejected the State of Alaska’s attempt to block the Department of the Interior (DOI) from taking land into trust to safeguard it for Alaska tribes.

“It’s important to acknowledge Governor Walker and Attorney General Lindemuth’s courage to move on from this decade long litigation,” said President Richard Peterson. “You’ve acted in the best interest of Alaska Natives and the State of Alaska as a whole. I also want to express my deep gratitude to the Akiachak Native Community, Chalkyitsik Village, Chilkoot Indian Association, Tuluksak Native Community (IRA), and Alice Kavairlook for challenging the Department of Interior’s exclusion of Alaska tribes in court. Central Council looks forward to working with the State alongside our Alaska Native brothers and sisters to implement the land-into-trust policy and build a new age of tribal and state collaboration.”

Trust lands are a cornerstone of federal Indian policy and are the key to federal and private sector funding and investment. Given our State’s fiscal challenges, tribal trust land is just one more solution to Alaska’s budget crisis. The ability for Alaska tribes to petition for trust land acquisition maximizes tribal government resources, eligibility for federal programs and services, and fosters economic development. It will help address public safety and child welfare issues, protect historic homelands and cultural sites, and expand funding for services, education, and housing.

Land-into-trust presents a multitude of advantages for the State and Alaska tribes, but overall it’s about tribal self-determination and the right for Alaska tribes to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of trust lands for themselves and their communities.

The DOI will begin accepting applications to take land-into-trust starting August 22, 2016. Federally recognized tribes can apply for land into trust by petitioning the Secretary of the Interior to take the land into trust specifically for the benefit of the tribe and its tribal citizens. Applications can be submitted to the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the land must qualify under federal Indian laws, historic preservation, and environmental laws.

Central Council’s priority will be to restore the federal protections to land previously lost. The Tribe has submitted a fee-to-trust and reservation proclamation applications for property Central Council holds in fee and lands held in federally restricted status by individual tribal citizens of Central Council. All parcels are located within the historical and cultural area long known as the “Juneau Indian Village” and comprise the parking lot and subsurface of Central Council’s Andrew Hope Building on Willoughby Avenue.



Map of Juneau Indian Village Lots showing Central Council owned property and lots that are in restricted status.

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