



KAWERAK, INC.

REPRESENTING

Brevig Mission

Sitaisaq

Council

Diomede

Iñaliq

Elim

Niviarcaurluq

Gambell

Sivuqaq

Golovin

Chinik

King Island

Ugiuvak

Koyuk

Kuuyuk

Mary's Igloo

Qawiaraq

Nome Eskimo

Sitnasuak Inuit

Savoonga

Sivungaq

Shaktoolik

Saktuliq

Shishmaref

Qikiqtaq

Solomon

Añuutaq

St. Michael

Taciq

Stebbins

Tapraq

Teller

Tala

Unalakleet

Uñalaqñiq

Wales

Kinigin

White Mountain

Iğaluik /

Nutchirviq

November 27, 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.

Kawerak, Inc. is the regional Tribal consortium in the Bering Strait Region, compacting with the Office of Self-Governance on behalf of 19 federally recognized Tribes.

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 National Parks and Preserves should be eligible lands for Veterans to apply for Native Allotments.
- Service providers such as Kawerak Land Management Services will be unable to handle the overflow of Probates once the Lands are approved for the Veterans. In addition, our Realty Program will need assistance. 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. Kawerak 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.

KAWERAK, INC.

PO Box 948 • Nome Alaska 99762 • 907.443.5231 • www.kawerak.org

Advancing the capacity of our people and tribes for the benefit of the region.

- 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 Bering Strait Region be limited to qualified Veterans enrolled in or eligible for enrollment in a Tribe in the Bering Strait Region.

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

Sincerely,

KAWERAK, INCORPORATED



Melanie Bahnke,
President

cc: Gail Schubert, President/CEO, Bering Straits Native Corporation