

ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

2009 CONVENTION

RESOLUTION 09-03

TITLE: IN SUPPORT OF NATIVE AMERICANS' FULL PARTICIPATION IN THE SBA 8(a) BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

WHEREAS: Congress has a legitimate interest in promoting the economic and political self-sufficiency of Native Americans as a way to fulfill the government's unique obligations toward Native Americans; and

WHEREAS: In hundreds of treaties with Indian tribes across the country, and through the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the U.S. government committed to provide for the economic betterment of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, the majority of whom have been stripped of countless millions of acres of their Native lands; and

WHEREAS: Providing access to federal contracting opportunities to qualified Native companies provides critical incentives that stimulate economic growth in Native communities, provides economic opportunities for Native American enterprises, provides educational scholarships, and encourages a culture of entrepreneurship; and

WHEREAS: One of the most successful federal initiatives has been to include Native Americans (Indian tribes, Alaska Native Corporations and Native Hawaiian Organizations) in the Small Business Administration's 8(a) Business Development program; and

WHEREAS: Native American enterprises have struggled to break into the highly concentrated federal contracting marketplace, which is dominated by a handful of large companies, and only recently have some Native American enterprises become successful participants in the 8(a) program; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native Corporations and tribal enterprises receive just over one percent (1%) of all federal contract awards, compared to the five largest federal contractors who received twenty (20%) of the contract dollars awarded in 2007; and

WHEREAS: Alaska Native Corporations and Tribal enterprises provide quality performance at cost efficient rates to federal customers, while they return significant benefits back to Native American communities, rendering the Native 8(a) program a rare example of a federal economic program that works; and

WHEREAS: Despite unwavering support from Alaska's Congressional delegation, there have been ongoing efforts by some members of Congress to repeal or significantly modify the Native 8(a) program based on biased information, and heedless of the federal government's unique obligations to Native Americans; and

WHEREAS: The Alaska Federation of Natives recognizes that the participation of Native Americans in the SBA 8(a) program has been an important tool in building a strong Native economy and continues to provide substantial benefits to their Native shareholders; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED by the Delegates to the 2009 Annual Convention of the Alaska Federation of Natives that the Alaska Federation of Natives respectfully requests the continued support of Congress to maintain Alaska Native Corporations, Indian tribes and Native Hawaiian Organizations in the 8(a) program for the benefit of America's Native communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Alaska Federation of Natives strongly encourages the Small Business Administration to seek ways to promote and expand participation in the 8(a) program by Alaska Native village and regional corporations and tribally chartered businesses; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Alaska Federation of Natives strongly opposes any Congressional amendments, regulatory changes or other means to diminish, alter, denounce, or abolish the current provisions established in the federal procurement system allowing Native Americans to create economic development for the benefit of their respective Native communities.

SUBMITTED BY: BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF THE ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES

CONVENTION ACTION: PASSED

