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**IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE STATE OF ALASKA
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT AT ANCHORAGE**

In the Matter of the)	Case No.	3AN-21-08869CI
)		3PA-21-02397CI
2021 Redistricting Plan.)		3VA-21-00080CI
_____)		

AFFIDAVIT OF MICHELLE ANDERSON

STATE OF ALASKA)
) ss.
THIRD JUDICIAL DISTRICT)

Affiant, Michelle Anderson, being first duly sworn upon her oath, deposes and states as follows:

1. Raised in the Ahtna region, I am an original shareholder and the current President of Ahtna, Incorporated (“Ahtna”). I am also a member of the Udzisyu (Caribou) clan of the Ahtna Athabascan people and a tribal member of the Native Village of Gulkana.

2. Ahtna is an Alaska Native regional corporation formed pursuant to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971. Ahtna’s corporate headquarters is located in Glennallen, and we have offices in Anchorage and Fairbanks.

3. Ahtna has more than 2,000 shareholders, many of whom still live within the Ahtna region. Our mission is the wise stewardship of Ahtna lands and responsible economic growth for future generations of Ahtna people.

4. Ahtna’s land entitlement under ANCSA encompasses over 1.7 million acres. The Ahtna region borders Mentasta to the north, Chitina to the south, and stretches into Wrangell-St. Elias National Park & Preserve to the east and the Denali National Park and Preserve to the west.

5. All of the villages and towns within this region share a common rural character. This includes Glenallen, the sub-regional hub for the area, as well as smaller towns and villages



from Cantwell and Mentasta in the north to Willow Creek, Tonsina, and Chitina in the south; and from Tolsona to Tazlina and Kluti-Kaah (Copper Center) across the middle of the Ahtna region. All these communities are considered Interior communities, and they all share a rural way of life. Anthropologists have established that Ahtna people traveled, lived on and from, and used these lands for at least 8,000 years. These traditional homelands measured approximately 24 million acres. After ANCSA, Ahtna, Incorporated was left with 1.7 million acres. Ahtna villages and the non-native communities across the region have learned to survive and thrive in extreme temperatures and climate. People must plan ahead for anything that could happen. That includes stocking up on food staples, hunting and fishing and putting those foods away in the freezer or preserving food items, preparing for power failure, and even preparing for if and when the local grocery store is closed or not able to stock food items. Roads are maintained by the State of Alaska and when the weather is inclement, road maintenance is iffy. What makes everything easier is the fact that the eight Ahtna villages are linked by familial connections and a traditional Athabaskan culture. As in most small towns and communities, people look after one another. There are few strangers.

6. Our focus in our redistricting plan was twofold: 1) to recognize and follow ANCSA regional boundaries as indicators of socioeconomic integration, and 2) to keep our keep our villages together in one house district.

7. The ANCSA regional boundaries are a great measure for socioeconomic integration, as Congress designated these regions based upon a well-documented common heritage and the sharing of a common language, culture, and traditions. The shareholders who enrolled in each of these regions share common family, culture, and traditions. These relationships extend back into time immemorial.

8. As to the Native villages within the Ahtna region, there are eight: Cantwell, Cheesh'na (Chistochina), Chitina, Kluti-Kaah (Copper Center), Gakona, Gulkana, Mentasta, and Tazlina; all eight are Federally Recognized Tribes. ANCSA created Village Corporations for these eight villages. In 1980, seven of the eight Village Corporations merged with Ahtna; Chitina Native Corporation remains an independent Village Corporation.

9. The villages within the Ahtna region have strong and extensive family ties, customary and traditional Ahtna practices, and thousands of years of familial, cultural & traditional, land use, and economic connection. From Chitina, to Mentasta, to Cantwell, our culture unites us.

10. These close familial ties also extend to the people in the upper Tanana – Tanacross, Dot Lake, Tetlin and Northway. We share the same language, hunting practices, and funerary and potlatch practices with the Athabaskan people who reside in these villages.

CANTWELL

11. Since I can remember, the Ahtna traditional Chiefs have always reminded us how we are related to the families that are living in Cantwell. These connections began were made way before the time there were roads, and they continue today.

12. The Ahtna people have historically been nomadic, hunting along the Denali Highway corridor and into the Cantwell area. To this day, the people of Cantwell and the people

in the other Ahtna villages share a common language, history, heritage, and way of life, including cultural and traditional values and practices such as hunting, fishing, berry picking, potlatch, dance, burial protocol and transferring traditional knowledge as Ahtna people always have – by oral sharing of genealogy and our clan system, teaching younger Ahtna about how to live off of the land and to take care of it and to respect the boundaries of the other clans who watched over the elaborate trail system that Ahtna people created to safely travel the region. Clan territory was respected by other Ahtna clans. Landmarks were the accepted way to talk about where they went and where they were from. Reflecting this historical connection, the Cantwell area still uses Ahtna place names to this day, such as Hukngestc'oxi Na' (Bull River), Y'idateni Na' (Cantwell Village), and Kantistaan Na' (Windy Creek).

13. Ahtna's vast private lands in and around Cantwell were selected by the Village of Cantwell for their customary and traditional value; namely hunting, grayling fishing, trapping and berry picking. After the village corporation merged with Ahtna in 1981, the protection of those lands was placed in the charge of the Ahtna Regional corporation.

14. Today, through their commonly owned Regional corporation, Ahtna, Incorporated, the people of Cantwell and the other Ahtna villages share a common interest in corporate profitability, responsible land ownership and land management, including land use, resource development, and trespass control. Cantwell has given permission for Ahtna to advocate and speak on behalf of their community to allow the Ahtna villages to remain as one people. In turn, Ahtna advocates for the Cantwell area on all these issues. Ahtna dedicates resources to lobby on behalf of Cantwell village regarding hunting, and legislative needs like a bike trail and other infrastructure.

15. Ahtna also advocates for employment and economic development in the area. Cantwell shareholders receive financial compensation from the Corporation when we record a profit. Cantwell elders receive an elder dividend in addition to their shareholder dividend. Cantwell people are eligible for educational assistance, burial assistance, land access, firewood, gravel and any other benefit other Ahtna shareholders receive. We also pay Cantwell's dues to participate in large statewide organizations like AFN and we represent their issues in other organizations like the ANCSA CEOs Association, ANTHC, Alaska Association of Housing Authorities. They are considered a part of Ahtna.

16. In addition to sharing lands and advocacy, the Cantwell people, through the local health clinic, are also served by the Copper River Native Association ("CRNA") who is chartered by the eight Ahtna tribes and headquartered in Glennallen. CRNA provides healthcare, dental care, behavior health, and social services to the Village of Cantwell. These are the same benefits that are provided to all our Ahtna villages.

17. Finally, Cantwell is unique in the Denali Borough. It is one of the only areas in the Borough that is of predominantly Native character. This highlights the importance of including the Cantwell voters with the other Alaska Native villages in the Interior region. When the Borough recently went through a naming process of streets in the Cantwell village and community, Ahtna, Incorporated asked the Borough to allow Cantwell shareholders to name their village roads by their traditional Ahtna names.

VALDEZ

18. The Ahtna people did not share those same familial and cultural connection with the coastal communities of Alaska. In fact, in historical times, our people were often at war with these communities. Although there may be some connections with Valdez and certain communities in the Ahtna region, the region as a whole has much more in common with the rest of the interior communities rather than coastal communities like Valdez or Cordova.

19. For example, there are very few socioeconomic ties between the rural interior communities and the city of Valdez. Valdez has an entirely different tax basis than we do in the interior: it is supported by the pipeline.

20. While we are connected by a road, communities in the Ahtna region are not impacted by, nor do we advocate for the same issues as Valdez and the other coastal communities. We face issues that are unique to the interior, such as: hunting and river fishing, trespass, wildlife management, rural employment and education, roads and transportation, and access to healthcare. Our interest in these issues is shared by communities across the Interior, including communities in the Doyon/ Tanana Chiefs Conference region, but not with coastal communities like Valdez.

21. Valdez, with its significant tax base and support from the Trans Alaska Pipeline System, operates as a well-funded city, and does not struggle for the same issues that we do in the interior.

22. Simply put, our people shop at different stores, lobby for different political interests, attend different churches, and we do not share schools or medical care. Also, our people do not share the same customs and traditions.

23. Further your affiant sayeth naught.

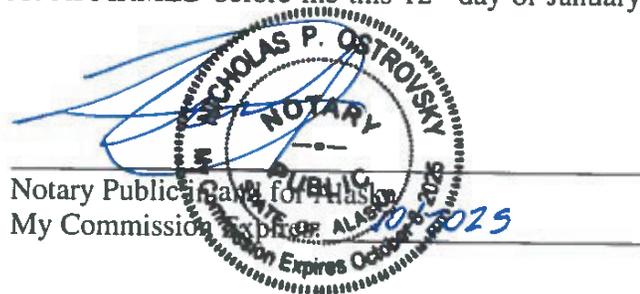
DATED at Anchorage, Alaska, this 12th day of January, 2022.

AFFIANT:



Michelle Anderson

SUBSCRIBED AND SWORN TO OR AFFIRMED before me this 12th day of January, 2022.



Notary Public for the State of Alaska
My Commission Expires October 10, 2025

Certificate of Service

I certify that on January 12, 2022, a copy of the foregoing document was served via email on:

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/s/ Karin Gustafson

Karin Gustafson