



**Don Young**  
*Congressman*  
*for All Alaska* **NEWS RELEASE**

2111 Rayburn House Office Building • Washington, DC 20515 • 202-225-5765 • <http://donyoung.house.gov>

September 19, 2007

**RANKING MEMBER DON YOUNG'S STATEMENT FROM TODAY'S HEARING ON 8(A)  
CONTRACTING ISSUES**

**“Native participation in the 8(a) program allows the United States to keep its promises to Alaska Natives and Indian tribes while creating the opportunities they need to create better lives for themselves. It is important that we continue to honor our promises and allow Alaska Natives and Indian Tribes to continue to work to better their lives while maintaining their cultural heritage.” –  
Rep. Don Young**

**Washington, D.C. – The following is U.S. Rep. Don Young's (R-Alaska) prepared statement from today's Congressional hearing examining the diversification of Native American economies – including the importance of 8(a) contracts for Native Americans and Alaska Natives.**

**Young is the Ranking Member on the House Natural Resources Committee which conducted today's hearing.**

“Mr. Chairman and Members of the Committee, I want to thank you for holding this hearing. This is an issue that is very important to Alaska Natives and Indian Tribes and I would like to thank the witnesses for being here today. I know that many have traveled great distances to testify before this committee.

“I'd like to start out by briefly going over the history of the Alaska Native Corporations, or ANCs and their participation in the 8(a) program. The Alaska Native Corporations were formed in a deal between Alaska Native leaders and the federal government. In exchange for giving up their land claims, 12 Alaska Native regional corporations were created, along with over 200 village corporations. These corporations were also given one-ninth of the land that they had aboriginal claim to and a monetary settlement as part of the deal. A thirteenth regional corporation was later created for the Alaska Natives that had moved from the state.

“Each ANC is owned entirely by Native shareholders, none of whom can sell their shares. Any profits the corporations make are returned to the shareholders through a dividend, reinvested in the company or used to support the Native community through cultural and social programs and scholarships.

“The 8(a) program has been a success story for the Alaska Native community. It has allowed the ANCs to create economic opportunity for their communities while preserving their culture and heritage. Most Alaska Native villages are inaccessible except by plane, severely limiting their ability to develop economically. Without this development, life in the villages would be one of day-to-day survival. As it is, many villages do not have water or sewer systems, offer few opportunities for employment and lack some of the modern conveniences that people in the Lower 48 take for granted, such as electricity and telephones.

“Of the over 200 regional and village corporations, only 12 are significant participants in government

contracting. These 12 receive less than one percent of all federal contracts and less than 17 percent of all contracts awarded through the 8(a) program. They have still had a huge impact on the Alaska Native community, employing over 3,100 Natives, awarding \$22 million in scholarships and donations to programs to preserve their culture and improving the lives of Alaskans in the villages.

“This is a good start. However, more Alaska Native Corporations and Indian Tribes from the Lower 48 should be encouraged to participate in the 8(a) program so that their communities can also benefit.

“Native participation in the 8(a) program allows the United States to keep its promises to Alaska Natives and Indian tribes while creating the opportunities they need to create better lives for themselves. It is important that we continue to honor our promises and allow Alaska Natives and Indian Tribes to continue to work to better their lives while maintaining their cultural heritage.

“I applaud Chairman Rahall (D-WV) for holding this hearing to discuss diversifying Native economies. I am glad to see that the Natural Resources Committee is exercising its jurisdiction over this important part of National Indian Policy.”

**For more information, access the Committee on Natural Resources’ Minority website at:**

**<http://republicans.resourcescommittee.house.gov/index.shtml>**

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