

**REQUESTING FOR STATE OF ALASKA LEGISLATURE
ADVOCATE FOR THE ROAD MAINTENANCE BETWEEN
CENTRAL AND CIRCLE, ALASKA ON THE STEESE
HIGHWAY AND UPGRADE THE 14 MILE BRIDGE**

WHEREAS, Tanana Chiefs Conference (TCC) is an Alaska Native tribal health and social services consortium established by the Interior Alaska tribes and tribal communities, to provide a unified voice in advancing sovereign tribal governments through the promotion of physical and mental wellness, education, socioeconomic development and culture of the Interior Alaska Native; and

WHEREAS, Alaska has a high cost-of-living, which exponentially increases in rural areas accessible only by plane. Alaska's size, climate, and distance from larger markets explains much of the difference in living costs between Alaska and the rest of the continental U.S.; and

WHEREAS, Many of TCC's member Tribes have no navigable roads, and others are only accessible via use of the Steese Highway. This makes the price for shipment of goods and materials to member tribes, many of which need to be freighted by air, very expensive. The lowest standard freight cost is \$0.65 cents per pound and these increase up to \$0.84 cents per pound. The lowest rate for oversized freight is \$1.10 cents per pound and, which increases up to \$1.55 per pound depending on the location of the Member Tribe; and

WHEREAS, 70% of the population of Circle live adjacent to the last two miles of the Steese Highway and their health and safety is jeopardized when the Steese Highway is not adequately maintained to allow for use by businesses and schools, emergency first responders, and the United States Postal Service. Furthermore, member Tribes use the Steese Highway in the Winter, Summer and Fall months to haul life-sustaining goods such as fuel and food, and other materials such as hardware, furniture, vehicles, and furniture to the landing at Circle, Alaska. From Circle, these goods and material are transported by boat, barge or snow machine to surrounding villages in the Yukon Flats; and

WHEREAS, Accordingly, the Steese Highway, and its proper maintenance¹, are necessary to ensure the health and safety of the residents of Circle

¹ See <https://dot.alaska.gov/stwdmno/> ("Maintenance and operation responsibilities include all the activities to keep our State's highways, bridges, airports, building and harbors in good condition and safe for the traveling public. These include highway and airport anti-icing and deicing, snowplowing, snow hauling, avalanche control and mitigation, vegetation management, guardrail repair, sign maintenance, street/traffic light repair, drainage structures, fence maintenance, airport light repair, airport rescue and firefighting, airport security, and facility repairs. It also includes responding to all emergency/weather

and the surrounding villages and to decrease the costs of freight and the cost of living for member Tribes in the Yukon Flats, which will in turn promote the regional economy.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors advocate to the State of Alaska Legislature and specifically to Senator Click Bishop and House Representative Mike Cronk, and to the State of Alaska Administration, Department of Transportation, to request for State-mandated road maintenance, including the upgrade and maintenance of the 14-mile bridge, between Central and Circle in accordance with State of Alaska, Department of Transportation responsibilities.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors on March 16, 2023 at Fairbanks, Alaska and a quorum was duly established.



Charlie Wright
Secretary/Treasurer

Submitted by: Beaver Village Council