

# ANC speaks for villagers in 1991 issue

by Gregg D. Renkes

for the Tundra Times

The Alaska Native Coalition is speaking out for the Native people of village Alaska in the congressional debate over the future of Native lands in Alaska.

The ANC was organized in early 1986 by tribal groups from across the state. Any tribal government in Alaska is eligible as a voting member, along with Alaska Native urban and village corporations.

Dalee Sambo, a member of ANC's executive committee, said ANC was created to strengthen tribal government in Alaska, advocate perpetual protections for Alaska Native lands and land uses and monitor 1991 legislation.

ANC began after 11 people representing the Yup'ik Nation, the Association of Village Council Presidents, the Sitka Community Association, the Native American Rights Fund and the Inuit Circumpolar Conference traveled to Washington, D.C., in February 1986.

The Alaskans met with the Alaska congressional delegation, other members of Congress, Indian support groups, churches and environmental groups to inform them of the concerns which villages and tribal governments had about proposed amendments to the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act which had passed the House and were before the Senate.

In March 1986, well over 20 people gathered in Sitka to discuss the formation of a statewide coalition to represent the concerns of villages and tribes. The Sitka meeting was held both to follow up on the trip to Washington and to formally organize Native communities to pursue protections for Native lands, self-government and hunting and fishing rights.

"The ANC embraces the findings of the Alaska Native Review Commission and intends to bring those findings

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# • Sambo: ANC seeks amendments for village needs

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to Congress," Sambo said. "The ANC hopes for amendments to ANCSA that meet the needs of the village people rather than amendments that are only beneficial to the large Native corporations."

The amendments to ANCSA were passed by the House last year, but defeated in the Senate when Alaska Natives withdrew their support.

ANC representatives said they do

not believe that the 1991 legislation introduced by Congressman Don Young and currently being considered by the House Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs goes far enough in protecting Native lands and advancing tribal rights.

However, after discussions with the Alaska Federation of Natives, ANC has agreed to support the legislation if changes are made.

John Borbridge Jr., a Tlingit from Juneau, and Willie Kasayulie, a Yup'ik from Akiachak, testified on behalf of the ANC at a March 4th

hearing in Washington, presenting ANC's requests for changes in the proposed 1991 legislation. Sambo outlined four points presented by ANC at the hearing:

- Where land is transferred from a Native corporation to a tribe using the "qualified transferee entity" provisions, those lands must not be subject to condemnation by the state. The legislation provides authority for a Native corporation dissolved involuntarily to convey all of its assets, including land, to a "qualified transferee

entity," a term intended to include Indian Reorganization Act governments and traditional Native village councils.

- All lands transferred under those provisions must be eligible for trust status.

- All developed lands transferred under the provisions must not be subject to taxation.

- The legislation should not affect title arguments that tribes might use to establish Indian country in Alaska.

ANC officials said they will not endorse the 1991 bill unless it reflects the four points.