

Nixon Sees Urgency of Settling Native Claims

New York, New York
October 5, 1968

HON. HOWARD POLLOCK
House of Representatives
Washington, D.C.

Dear Howard:

Pursuant to my discussions with you and Elmer Rasmuson I want to take this opportunity to publicly state my position in regard to the Alaska Native Land Claims.

I am aware of the importance of this issue to the people of your state. The Native citizens of Alaska deserve full compensation for the injustice that has resulted from the neglect of their claims. This neglect, as you know, was clearly recognized in our Party's National platform and a pledge was made to promote policies responsive to the needs and desires of the Indian and Eskimo people. Solution to the land claims problem is an intricate part of this pledge—a promise I fully support. In addition, the development of the state as a whole dictates that there be no further delay in reaching a settlement.

Therefore, I can state the following points on the land claims question:

1. A Nixon-Agnew Administration will officially recognize the justice of the aboriginal Alaska land claims and the need for just compensation, either in money, lands, royalties or some combination.
2. A Nixon-Agnew Administration will give top priority to the speedy solution of the Alaska Native Land Claims. This will be the case regardless of the outcome of the current litigation concerning the so-called "land freeze."
3. A Nixon-Agnew Administration will cooperate closely with you and other Congressional leaders to achieve the best settlement possible in the quickest time.
4. A Nixon-Agnew Administration will consult with your Governor, Walter J. Hickel, and other state officials and with Native groups with a view towards achieving a consensus on a settlement. A solution will not be arrived at behind the secrecy of closed doors.

I am proud of the role I played in the creation of the State of Alaska. While in the Senate I co-sponsored a bill for Alaska Statehood and as Vice President was a part of the Eisenhower Administration that finally admitted the 49th state into the Union. Having participated and fought for such a momentous event for Alaska, I cannot help but have a deep and abiding interest in its future. With this in mind, you can be assured that as President, I will take steps to see that this critical problem now facing your people will be quickly solved.

Sincerely,
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