

# AVCP Editorial

*This editorial is an excerpt of testimony presented by Carl Jack on behalf of AVCP at oversight hearings on President Reagan's proposed federal budget, held by the U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs February 18, 1986 in Washington, D.C.*

The new national policies toward Alaska Natives, as reflected in the Administration's budget request for 1987, signal drastic changes in the relationship between our people and the federal government. The Administration's budget, submitted to the Congress in February utilizes fiscal notes on appropriations to make major changes in federal policy that formerly would have been stated in Congressional findings. The Administration states that Alaska Natives have less need for assistance because of economic benefits provided by the Alaska

profitable year, 3 years ago, Calista Corporation paid our shareholders a 20-cent per share dividend, or an average of \$20 per shareholder. Twenty dollars will not replace assistance provided our people from education, vocational training, health, housing, or any other federal Indian programs. Two recent documents, based upon exhaustive hearings and research, offer concrete evidence that ANCSA has not provided any substantive benefits to the vast majority of Alaska Natives.

AVCP respectfully encourages the Members of this Committee and your professional staff to review *Village Journey*, the report of the Alaska Native Review Commission by Justice Thomas Berger, as well as the Interior Department's 1985 Report to the Congress on ANCSA. Both reports indicate that Alaska Natives, despite



*AVCP Vice President Tom Richards*

Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA), that there are no longer Indian tribes in Alaska, and that the State of Alaska is financially able and willing to replace federal Indian services to Alaska Natives.

None of these statements is true. Under Section 7(a) of ANCSA, AVCP was required to cause the incorporation of Calista Corporation, our regional profit corporation. Our profit corporation has been profitable in only one out of the last 14 years. From that

ANCSA, remain among the most economically disadvantaged peoples in the United States. The BIA's own 1985 study completely refutes what the Bureau and the Department are now telling the Congress about Alaska Natives and ANCSA. Similarly, observations concerning tribal government in Alaska are unfounded.

The AVCP Region is home to about one-quarter of the Native villages in Alaska. Each of the 56 villages in our region has a viable tribal government

in place. Eleven of these villages have tribal governments chartered under the Indian Reorganization Act of 1934, extended to Alaska by the Congress in 1936. The other 45 villages have traditional governments. These tribal governments govern the affairs of our member Native communities. They regularly conduct relations with federal agencies, including the BIA and Indian Health Service and Department of Housing and Urban Development, and most tribal communities have agreements with these agencies which are in effect at this date. Seventeen villages have no state-chartered municipality, and have no intention of establishing city governments because of their intense desire to retain tradi-

to Alaska Natives. As Governor Sheffield and the Alaska Legislature will confirm, the state is moving to curtail existing programs and forego new state services. Being an oil-producing state, Alaska is facing sharply declining revenues and is making an effort at budget reductions similar to that of the federal government. Even if the state could afford it, the majority of our villages lack water and sewer systems and many basic needs which have yet to be met. In 1983, Congress terminated BIA General Assistance to Alaska Natives. Contrary to the Administration's belief, this has not been replaced by state assistance. Since that termination, a great many village families must now buy heating fuel in

*"The (Reagan) Administration's budget request for 1987 signals drastic changes in the relationship between our people and the federal government."*

tional Native government and culture. These tribal governments were unaffected, and even ignored, by the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act.

Even the Administration's suggestion in the budget document that there are no trust or unrestricted Indian lands in Alaska, outside of Metlakatla, is untrue. Within the AVCP Region alone, there are 2,700 Native Allotments, established pursuant to the Native Allotment Act of 1906, and 800 restricted Native townsite lots, created under the Native Townsite Act of 1926. Apart from the relationship between our 56 member tribal communities and the federal government, the United States has a trust responsibility to more than 400,000 acres of property held by 3,500 restricted property owners in our region.

The Administration also observes that the State of Alaska is willing and able to assume financial responsibility for present federal Indian services

5-gallon cans, because they cannot afford to buy 50-gallon drums, and they only heat their homes at night despite 20-below temperatures. The loss of \$800,000 in annual General Assistance payments in the AVCP Region also means many families must seek community donations and bingo funds to bury deceased relatives because no alternative aid is available.

While we recognize these are not appropriation hearings, we wish to briefly summarize the impact of the Administration's budget request on Native individuals, families and communities in our region. A detailed analysis of this impact is attached for your information. Reductions in the BIA budget, aimed at Alaska Natives are as follows: College Scholarships, 40%; Adult Education, 100%; Agricultural Extension, 100%; Tribal

(Continued on Page Seven)



# Federal Budget Cuts Will Have a Big Impact

(Continued from Page Two)

Operations, 35%; Social Services, 40%; Self-Determination Grants to Tribal Councils, 18%; Training and Technical Assistance for Tribal Governments, 54%; Adult Vocational Training, 61%; Direct Employment Assistance, 68%; Road Maintenance, 100%; Agriculture, 56%; Water Resources, 100% Wildlife and Parks, 12%; Minerals and Mining 100%; ANILCA programs, 51%; ANCSA Cemeteries and Historical Sites identification, 100%; Housing Improvement (HIP), 36%; Agency Superintendent Operations, 61%; and Agency Administration, 100%.

The reductions, and the continued use of the budget as a policy instrument for termination of Alaska Natives, will have a devastating impact on Native people in the AVCP Region and throughout Alaska. The funds will not be replaced by the state nor by any other source. For example, the reduction in college scholarships will mean that, of 130 Yup'ik college students funded by AVCP with BIA funds, only 78 may be funded next year. Fifty-two existing students will have to be cut from the program and no graduating high school students may be accepted. In most cases, state assistance will be unavailable, as the state now requires a 25% cash match for scholarships and village family income will not provide for this because

of the current depression in the commercial fishing industry.

Young people seeking vocational careers will also be affected. Currently, with BIA vocational training grants, AVCP is assisting 39 young men and women to become commercial pilots, electricians, plumbers, carpenters, power plant operators, cooks, and secretaries. Next year, only

Native people to become trained and qualified to provide nearly all program services formerly provided by the BIA. Our Realty program, using BIA Realty and ANILCA funds, has recruited and trained 11 qualified Yup'ik individuals to provide services to 3,500 restricted land owners in the region. BIA, in its budget request, cites reduced workload as justification

---

*"...Continued use of the budget as a policy instrument for termination of Alaska Natives will have a devastating impact on Native people..."*

---

17 may be assisted. The cuts in college scholarships, adult basic education and vocational training will have a long-term negative impact on Native employment in the villages. Young people will no longer be able to become qualified for the few permanent jobs in their home communities. Non-Natives from outside will have to be imported to take jobs which otherwise would have gone to young Natives.

AVCP, like many other tribal organizations in Alaska, has used the self-determination process to enable

for a 51% cut in ANILCA program funds. Our caseload, at present, has a ten-year backlog. Far from becoming lessened, the recent "Fannie Barr" lawsuit settlement will mean an additional 200 cases will be assigned to us this coming year. The settling of land title questions is essential to economic development in the villages and long-term economic self-sufficiency of Native communities.

While AVCP is concerned about each of the targeted programs, we wish to point out the impact of one final activity, the Housing Improve-

ment Program. Last year, the BIA asked us to survey the housing need in 34 of our member villages. We went house to house in each village, applying the BIA's own standards in evaluating those homes. We have certified that 706 Native families need new housing which is not available from any other source, and that 500 more families need basic repairs to make their homes livable, according to the BIA's standards. At an average estimate of \$25,000 for each new home and \$2,000 in repairs for each older home, \$17,650,000 is needed for new HIP construction and \$1,000,000 is needed for repairs. Our current year's allocation for those 34 villages is \$320,000. Therefore, we cannot understand how the BIA can request Congress to reduce next year's allocation to \$204,800 or to about 1% of the identified need.

AVCP, on behalf of our 56 member villages and 20,000 Yup'ik constituents, asks that this Committee and the Congress resume their rightful role in deciding federal policy towards Alaska Natives. Very few Alaska Natives have benefited from ANCSA, and the great majority remain economically disadvantaged. Our tribal governments seek good faith dealings and relations

(Continued on Page Fourteen)

## Federal Cut

(Continued from Page Seven)

with the federal government. The State of Alaska will not and may not assume responsibility for federal Indian programs. Most importantly, the Congress should not permit the Administration to terminate our special relationship with the federal government through the budget process. There is an alternative.

Many years ago, the Congress established a method by which Alaska Natives and American Indians may decide for themselves budget priorities for BIA program services. Through this process, tribal representatives assign funding priorities for BIA programs based on knowledge of local needs. Selective funding cuts in BIA programs for Alaska Natives subverts this process. What we ask is that Congress recognize the Administration's

termination by budget and set aside the proposed 1987 budget. We would like to be treated like any other group of Native Americans and would like to be treated in the manner in which the Congress has always required of the BIA. Certainly, there must be budget reductions. Let us, and all other American Indian tribes, know how much of a reduction is required. Congress should establish a national target for reductions for all American Indians and Alaska Natives, and then permit us to decide which programs will be affected and in what amounts. We will accept reductions, along with all other Americans, so long as they are equitable and we have a significant role in the decision-making process. Thank you for your attention and for the opportunity for us to advise you of our concerns.