



Department of the Interior Public Safety Listening Session

**Bethel, Alaska
August 21, 2019**

**At the Invitation of the
Association of Village Council Presidents**



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Summary Solutions

FROM MORNING AGENCY and PARTNER SPEAKERS:



- We need better data.
- National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NMUPS) has helped to leverage federal resources to identify and find missing persons.
- Compacting between DOJ and Tribes of Alaska.
- Federal funds through Denali Commission.
- Legislation to change jurisdiction.
- BIA – Cold Case Task Force – Task Force for MMIW.
- BIA, Office of Justice Services – Training in the region for tribal courts.
- ANA – Programs for AK Tribes on languages and social/economic development.

REQUESTED IN TRIBAL COMMENTS

(details in following pages):

- 🌿 Non-Competitive, Permanent and Direct Funding to Tribes
- 🌿 Compacting model through the Denali Commission
- 🌿 Infrastructure Development and Public Safety Housing
- 🌿 Training for all levels of officers
- 🌿 Better Response Times from Alaska State Troopers
- 🌿 Tribal Court development
- 🌿 Interdiction on drug and alcohol traffic
- 🌿 Partner Agreements / Roving Programs
- 🌿 Working with the Community / Community-Based Solutions
- 🌿 AVCP as a Demonstration Site for a Public Safety Service Delivery Model by compacting funding through multiple sources



Opening Speakers

9:15 am

Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary, DOI Office of Indian Affairs

Thank you for extending the invitation for my office to come here and participate in this Public Safety summit. We all know there are alarming statistics that plague our Native communities. We see it here in Alaska and we see it in the lower 48. I welcome the opportunity to learn from you. I welcome the opportunity to listen and to have a productive dialogue on how we can help at the Department of the Interior with law enforcement and public safety in our villages.

Earlier this year we held a listening session at the Gila River community in Arizona to bring together tribal leadership from across the country to talk about issues of domestic violence, sexual abuse, cold cases, and missing and murdered indigenous women (MMIW). During that session Gloria O'Neil with Cook Inlet Tribal Council and Michelle Demmert from Tlingit & Haida joined. Their attendance reminded me there are a diversity of perspectives in our state and it's important to bring that listening session here to Alaska. We were in Nome earlier this week and now we are here. I'm so honored to be here at the request of AVCP.

I also want to recognize the individuals I am traveling with:

- Tara Sweeney Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs, US DOI
- Kate MacGregor Deputy Chief of Staff, US DOI
- Molly Black Press Secretary, US DOI
- Stephanie Hanning Program Analyst, US DOI
- Charlie Addington Director, Office of Justice Services
- Tricia Tingle Office of Justice Services, US DOI
- Audrey Sessions Office of Justice Services, US DOI
- Eugene Peltola Director, Alaska Region, BIA, US DOI
- Mirtha Beadle Senior Advisor to Commissioner, Native American Affairs, US DHHS
- Rachel Bisset Special Assistant to the Attorney General, US DOJ
- Jennifer Lichter Deputy Director, Domestic Policy Council
- Doug Hoescher Director, Intergovernmental Affairs
- Amber Ebarb Office of Senator Murkowski
- Anna Dietderich Office of Senator Murkowski
- Kellie Chong Office of Senator Murkowski
- Quinton Carroll Office of Senator Sullivan

Everybody knows the home town boy, Buzzy (Gene Peltola, Jr.) who has been an absolute resource for me in my office and very effective in sharing the issues and challenges inside of our communities and as tribal communities come in and meet with him on their issues, those issues float up straight to me in my office. I enjoy having him as our keystone in the office here in Alaska as the Regional Director for the BIA.

We're here to listen. We're here to learn. The purpose is to learn from you, to hear perspectives on how we can reclaim our Native communities, what we can do to be part of the solutions in arresting these statistics that plague our communities. We want to take what you have to say and bring it back to Washington, DC to make informed choices and better recommendations.

Kate MacGregor, Deputy Chief of Staff, U.S. DOI

I want to thank our Assistant Secretary Tara Sweeney on her very strong leadership on this important issue. I also want to thank AVCP for having us in the Calista region. I want you all to know that this issue is a priority for the DOI and the Trump Administration.

- Job growth to reduce unemployment and poverty levels.
- Battled opioids.
- Drive economic development to rural communities.
- Proclamation May 5 is MMI and AN Awareness day.
- Women are the sacred centers of our families. When they are violently taken from us, it is a loss that echoes throughout generations.
- Solutions need to come from our communities.

Here's what we think we know:

- Less than half of violent victimization of Native women are reported to the police;
- 84% of Native women have experienced violence;
- 56% have experienced sexual violence.

Crafting Solutions:

- We need better data.
- National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NMUPS) has helped to leverage federal resources to identify and find missing persons.
- We learned in AZ there are 116 cases in that area for NMUPS.
- BIA working with the National Institute of Justice have entered tribal affiliation as a data point in the system.
- We need more inter-operable systems: the FBI has a national crime center database, tribes have their own, states track differently, and they do not talk to each other.
- Better forensics and training to prosecute perpetrators and put them behind bars.
- We need solutions that start with and come from the community.
- Need to address jurisdictional confusion.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of a Cold Case Taskforce.

Calista and AVCP should be applauded for taking on their own safety assessments, which the Senators proudly pointed out to us.

Jennifer Lichter, Deputy Director, Domestic Policy Council

- President Trump is committed to helping every American individual, family and community flourish.
- It doesn't leave anybody out no matter where you live, no matter how far away from Washington DC you are, and that absolutely includes your communities here in Alaska.
- Domestic Policy Council working with White House, HHS, DOI on public safety.
- I'm really interested in taking your suggestions, you input and your stories back to Washington DC with us, to inform our work as we continue to think about how to partner with you, while we honor your special heritage and your contributions to your country, and how we can help your communities be the best that they can be.

Henry Hunter, Sr., Chair of Orutsararmiut Native Council

I would like to say thank you to Tara Sweeney and all the delegates who come here to speak about public safety. I welcome all of you. Hopefully we will have a successful gathering here. The Y-K Delta is very unique because I can't get in my car and drive to St. Mary's, I have to take a boat. Over the years at the AVCP Convention we've heard this over and over: safety in the villages. People in Anchorage and Fairbanks have public safety, but in some of our 56 villages we don't have it.

- Villages who don't have TPOs or VPSOs have to call the troopers. The reason I say this is because how long it takes the troopers to respond.
- Sometimes hours, sometimes days, sometimes more than a week.

A traditional chief at AVCP used to welcome delegates and dignitaries to Bethel, and he would tell them to 'reach out with your right hand, if you will work with me, and I will reach out with my left hand to work with you'.

Ray Watson, Chair of the Board of AVCP

On behalf of AVCP I'd like to welcome all the representatives from their respective villages and the representatives from the state and federal government. We're gathered here at a time where we're on the cusp of a change. I did a little history on PL 280 and in 1953 this law was enacted. How many of us were here in 1953? In 1951 the population of Bethel was 901, and it's 7,000 now.

- Think about how PL280 must change in terms of jurisdiction for our people.
- There's something about this law that must change for the protection our tribes, the protection of our villages in Alaska.

PL280 was only given to 6 states in 1953. Think about how PL280 has impacted our ancestors, it's impacting us today, and if nothing changes it will impact our grandchildren. We're hurting here and in our villages for public protection. We're hurting because we demand the same kind of protection that our brothers and sisters down south take for granted. I want all of you here to listen and take back in your heart, because Barr took it to heart. He graciously provided on-time \$10 million in funding. We need to think out of the box and offer solutions that will work in our communities. Like some are saying, there's no infrastructure in roads, we don't have a railroad, or the basic road system that our brothers and sisters down south have.

- As our communities continue to grow, public safety becomes even more linked to population growth. The whole region has about 26,000 but in 10 years it will be far more.

In your own villages of the Delta, what plans do you have that your mother, your aunt, your grandmother have that protection? What can you do as a representative? Give voice, and speak on behalf of your people, because they deserve it. We're a resilient people here, the Yup'ik and Cup'ik people. But we always are adaptable – that's our culture.

- It's time that we work on some change, because things are aligning with the federal government, with Homeland Security, things are aligning so the opportunity is there to grasp a model that will work in the Delta.

I appreciate all the young people here and the kind of old people here [laughing] because we need the wisdom of both, especially the young people because we may be around for a while. I would like to see the young people step up. I welcome everyone here and have a good conference.

Amber Ebarb, Lead Policy Staff handling Rural and Native Affairs, Office of Senator Murkowski

- Senator Murkowski has prioritized public safety for rural AK and AK communities over the years.
- She's worked on the issue of violence against women through reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act.

- Murkowski is on the Appropriations Committee and is working hard to address the patchwork of rules which together fail to provide a unified basis enabling tribes to provide the rule of law in civil society.
- We've heard from rural Alaska that the status quo is not working.
- Want to enable tribes through tribal courts and tribal authority which requires federal funding and legislations to fix jurisdictional gaps.
- Address the invisible crisis we've discussed so far around MMIW and children. Unconscionable rates of human trafficking of Native women which is less visible.
- Murkowski has introduced the "Not Invisible Act" and will mark up in SCIA "Savannah's Act".
- Efforts to provide appropriations to Alaska and PL280 states.
- These tangible, concrete steps are necessary to address public safety in Alaska where tribes want to exercise self-governance.

Quinton Carroll, Office of Senator Sullivan

Thank you to Chair Hudson, Chair Watson, and Vivian Korthuis for your invitation to be here today.

What is needed: inventories in your communities, obvious lack of law enforcement, treatment centers, housing infrastructure.

- We are excited to take this proposal, work together at the federal level with the Administration and the tribes to try to find ways to bring these to your communities.
- Sullivan introduced legislation to provide legal representation to victims of domestic violence and sexual assault. If a crime is committed, the perpetrator automatically receives representation, but oftentimes the victim does not have the resources for representation and get lost in the system. Sullivan will be working with Senator Kamala Harris on this.
- Sullivan will work with Senator Murkowski on legislation to address MMIW.
- Every community deserves law enforcement, it's unacceptable to have communities that have been asking for law enforcement and it's not there. We need to work at the state, federal and tribal levels to work in partnership to bring that to your communities.
- We're optimistic the recent funding from the Department of Justice from the emergency declaration is not a one-time expenditure and look forward to working with the DOJ on this.

Julie Kitka, President of the Alaska Federation of Natives

I want to note that it has been a long time since a Native person held such an important position in the Administration. In 1973 Morris Thompson served from the interior of AK. Tara Sweeney is the first Alaska Native woman to hold this position. This is for real. The people she has brought from the White House are key people in the government that make these decisions. This is unprecedented attention that is being paid. We are so grateful that AG Barr came to our communities in AK and declared that emergency in rural public safety.

People have gotten used to doing so much with so little for so long, we just got used to not having the resources that we need, the legal authority, or our rights respected. The people here today are saying they want to change that and really make a difference. It's for real, it's serious. What's making it serious is times are changing: we are no longer isolated in the State of AK, we are no longer isolated in our communities. What's happening is being monitored and noticed by other people, as well as their activities impacting us. There is change happening in our world, state and communities. Recently at a national counter-intelligence agency meeting, they were shocked there were 60 villages with no public safety. They saw the national security implications about keeping people safe.

We have opportunities in three areas - 1) Improve Public Safety (PS), 2) Improve Law Enforcement (LE), and 3) improve Security. These are coming together. That is what will generate the momentum and bring the resources we need. We can't take it from other programs that are vital to our people; we need additional resources. We need access to justice for every community in our state. While we distinguish between PS, LE and Security, these are 3 separate areas. We don't just want arrests and our people thrown in jail; we want safety in our communities. We want security in our communities, our region and state. All three have to work together.

AFN has a few recommendations to address things in the short, medium long term:

#1 Recommendation- Short-Term: When DOJ release \$10.5 M in funding, but also directed every agency in the DOJ to report back on what more can be done. The directive was to take action and come back with a plan. Our delegation is ready to take the best of the best ideas that our people want and get resources through the appropriations process and get legal authority to do things. We know we need changes in jurisdiction. We believe the opportunity to make those changes in jurisdiction are on the table. We have the ability to take responsibility for ourselves to take the helping hand from the federal government, and resources to do what we want; try and get the jurisdiction that we need to take care of ourselves and our communities. We can exercise our tribal rights, as citizens of our tribes, and be fully recognized as state and federal citizens.

Long-Term: We identified about \$175M for long term measures identified by AK tribes and organizations for training, prevent crime, enhance law enforcement, providing state of the art equipment. AG Barr has this funding within his department. What he doesn't have is the ability to pool this together in a compact that would come to our tribes and consortia.

- This is the #1 priority through AFN, through our White House officials and AK Delegation, let's get a compacting authority to move those resources into Alaska. The compacting ability within the DOJ is essential. We have draft language to put into this year's Appropriations bill.

1. Compacting: we can get more resources down at the grass roots level. We're familiar with compacts; health care system and BIA run through compacts, why can't public safety?

#2 Recommendation: This has to do with what Vivian and the AVCP Board have looked at, and this is the Millennium Challenge Demonstration Project. This is a 5-year compacting opportunity which the AK and HI Senators have already introduced in legislation.

2. AFN is calling for an amendment to the draft bill that is pending to have a new provision for Access to Justice, with new provisions under the MCDP to have resources not in a grant, but in a 5-year compact and a pool of resources for big projects.

#3 Recommendation: In the Appropriations cycle this year, we want legislation making it crystal clear, notwithstanding any other provision of law, that the Denali Commission can provide grants for PS and LE infrastructure. DOJ doesn't have infrastructure money.

3. Denali Commission is a federal-state partnership totally focused on rural infrastructure that has granted almost \$1 billion. 120 of our village clinics were built by these resources. Get us access to infrastructure dollars, run it through the Denali Commission and get it out so we can build the infrastructures and facilities we need.

Whether for housing for our VPSO or TPOs, or training, or career paths for public safety. We need these people to be paid well, a respected position in our community – not someone making below minimum wage - with good equipment. Some of you remember our Health Aides still qualified for welfare even getting paid for their full-time jobs. Domestic violence is a very hidden offense, across the United States. It's a hidden, hard thing to see happen and try to intervene. It is not fair for our Community Health Aides and community members to go into DV situations and try to rescue families and children without adequate training.

We need multiple agencies involved. It's not just the White House and the DOJ, but also Homeland Security. We're in such a changing time for our country; there are many threats facing Alaska. Why do we have the largest fleet of F35s coming in to our state for scrambling in an emergency, why do we have the largest missile defense system in our lifetime? It's an all-of-government approach.

What we get done now, next six months, in a year – make a plan and make that happen. AFN has had 4 meetings with the Defense Department and military here in the state. One of the key things the military does is Leadership Training, Suicide Prevention, Domestic Violence, and First Responders in Emergencies. They want to learn what we are doing, there is synergy in sharing. We could partner with Hot Shot Fire Crews. Veterans system is asking AK for help in health care system because we have stunning models of effective health care programs with records that track a patient's care for life. Alaska Natives make up 20% of the state population. We're the largest landowners with 44 million acres of land. We have surface rights and subsurface rights.

If there is ever a time for us to make progress, this is it. Speak up and tell the people here today exactly what you want. We're not asking for more than anybody else is. We're just asking for real access to justice and safety for our communities.

Charles Addington, Director of BIA Office of Justice Services

When Tara Sweeney came on board mid-last year, we'd already been in discussions about what we can do in AK as a PL280 state. This is the first time I've heard about this much support for public safety in AK. We hear a lot about MMIW and violent crime. Violent crime is associated with drug and substance abuse. Listed potential federal partners with resources to bring to the table. You have victims out there who don't know how to go through the system without those resources. We have to have all the stakeholders involved so we can get to solutions at every level.

We're working on 3 Pillars:

1. Task Forces –
 - a. Cold Case Task Force; we're working to get Tribal Affiliation as a field of data in the National Missing and Unidentified Persons System (NMUPS);
 - b. Task Force for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women;
 - c. Develop an Oversight Governing Board for the Task Force work;
2. BIA has funding to work with PL280 states to help get tribal courts up and running; you can have police officers, but you have to have courts to handle the cases;
3. Tell us who we are missing from stakeholders among the federal agencies working on Public Safety.

We can't forget that kids coming to school are dealing with multiple traumas, and we need to include those stakeholders in the education system too.

We also want Memoranda of Agreement and Standard Operating Procedures between all agencies to understand the domains and data of each, and then work together on cases to prioritize and assign to task forces. This also helps us share information on perpetrators who might jump from reservation to reservation, or village to village.

These are questions we would like everyone to be thinking about during our session:

- How can we further incorporate tribal law enforcement or the state, whoever is doing the policing, in strengthening your reporting measures?
- Are there any stakeholders who are missing?

Opioids – the Secretary of the Interior has tasked BIA OJS with putting together a BIA-DOI Opioid Task Force to address the opioid epidemic in Indian Country. We’ve put together teams with local, state and federal partners to achieve in this last year:

- 372 arrests
- Over 4,000 pounds of narcotics with estimated \$9.8 million value removed from the streets.
- Canine interdiction unit just last week took about 86 pounds of meth and heroin off the street with estimated value of \$4 million.

Mirtha Beadle, Senior Policy Advisor for the Commissioner of the Administration for Native Americans

Vivian is on the ANA advisory committee, and I thank her for the ability to be here. The ANA is led by Commissioner Jeannie Hovland. ANA supports Native American communities by providing financial assistance and capacity building, gathering and sharing data, and advocating for improved policies within HHS and across the federal government.

- ANA has Grant Programs available to all Native communities.
- Within HHS are 11 components; one is the Administration for Children and Families which supports Head Start, LIHEAP, Child Protection Enforcement. ANA is a sister agency of these 11.
- Commissioner Hovland is the chair of the Intra-Departmental Council on Native American Affairs and works directly with IHS Deputy Director Rear Admiral Michael Weahkee. ANA can carry messages directly to this Council to address issues.
- ANA has three specific program areas:
 - Native Languages; language and culture are preventative against crime.
 - Native Language and Preservation Program;
 - Esther Martinez Immersion Program; work through Language Nests and Language Survivor Schools;
 - Social and Economic Development Strategies Program, with specific programs for Alaska Natives.
 - Ensure inter-related issues that impact Native communities are addressed in a holistic manner.
 - Environmental Regulatory Enhancement Program – for tribes to develop their regulatory programs, including law enforcement.

Alarming Statistics:

- Homicide is the 3rd leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women between 10-24 years of age.
- Homicide is the 5th leading cause of death among American Indian and Alaska Native women between 25-34 years of age.
- About 85% of Alaska Native women have experienced violence in their lifetime.
- We also have to talk about human trafficking as a component of this.

The way we have to respond to these issues is in an interdisciplinary way. The context of family should be around all of this. It’s not just the person who is missing, it’s the family that is left behind that need these resources.

- Native Youth – ANA has a toolkit available
- Alaska Native Women’s Resource Center is also available.

Tricia Tingle, BIA Office of Justice Services

I want to commend AVCP and Vivian and Rick Garcia for doing a wonderful job with the funding that we’ve been able to provide. We do tribal court assessments within PL280 jurisdiction.

- In the 2019 Appropriations Bill language, there was \$13 million provided and Senator Murkowski is a force behind that.
- Of that \$13 million, \$7 million came to Alaska.
- Last year was \$1 million to the AVCP region; this year is over \$2 million, and we're not done with our funding yet.
- 21 tribes are familiar with the BIA OJS Tribal Court Assessments, 11 are in the queue, with 22 to go.
- AVCP is a Tiwahe tribe and over \$700,000 has come to AVCP from Tiwahe.
- We're trying to build up an infrastructure though tribal courts that are informed about domestic violence. Rick Garcia and the Tribal Justice Department has done a Master Series Program in September and October and my team will be back in October to work with individual tribes. Darlene is training in Yup'ik. The purpose of self-governance is for you to have the opportunity to do the training.
- Opioid training, we recognize AK is different. September 9-12 will be a training for tribal judges on how opioids and meth affect the brain, so they know the difference and how to respond.
- Working with Tlingit & Haida to do tribal court training in October for tribal presenters dealing with child protection issues, in dealing with our vulnerable tribal citizens. AVCP has been invited to do this SAFE training as well.
- PL280 law withdrew federal jurisdiction and placed it with state, but the law did not say anything about inherent tribal jurisdiction. Clearly you have jurisdiction over your children. The Juvenile Justice Division allows tribes to have jurisdiction over your children.
- Rule 11 allows tribes to have a say in the state senate seat.
- BIA has proposed civil regulatory training.

10:50 am Brief Recess – Reconvene at 11:00 am

11:00 am - Gene Peltola, Jr., Regional Director for BIA in Alaska

We are a strong people. When we identify challenges, a lot of times we can solve them on our own. Sometimes we have to look for help. Today we have a great opportunity and receptive ears for that help in regard to public safety in our communities. Today, 44 people are registered to speak of the 47 tribes present.



Tribal Comments

Phillip Peter, Sr. – Council Chair for Akiachak Native Community:

- **Work with Community Members** - I work with the TA, Police chief, tribal court judge, social work – I visit and help them in Akiachak to operate and work with community members. WE cannot sit down and do nothing, we have to help if we love our communities. We get together and work together, and that's how we work.
- **Liquor Store opened** - we decided to have a community meeting to use our laws. You can enter Akiachak through the river, from upriver route, we confiscated alcohol about 50 bootlegged, it was a lot. You people on the panel from Washington DC I'm thankful. We are in dire need of help and I thank you very much, I thank AVCP and the staff, and the executive Board of AVCP. We need to become one, that's how we can have strength, all our 57 communities to be one.

Sheila Carl – Tribal Administrator for Akiak Native Community:

- Goal is to build a safe and healthy community for our families and our children.
- **Non-Competitive Funding** - We've access COPS funding but it's very competitive; under-resourced communities can't access the funding we've been fortunate to receive. We need access to funds that are *not competitive* to be able to provide PS in our communities.
- **BIA response is inadequate**, I'd like to see BIA police funding restored directly to Alaska Native Tribes.

Patrick Phillip – Secretary of Alakanuk Tribe:

- **Infrastructure/Housing** - Our city has no infrastructure like we used to have.
- We're not alone, many villages don't have public safety.

Peter Tyson – Secretary/Treasurer of Algaaciq Native Community:

- **Better Response Time** - when we need help, they all at the Village Council, in about an hour they get back to the same person again. It takes days to get people out from Cooper Station, even though they are near us, they are out in other villages.
- **Visit our Communities** - During break with my friends, mentioned it would be nice if you went and see the shortage of PS officers firsthand. Transportation and trying to find a place to stay are hard, just to get to and from will take you 3 hours.

Barbara Morgan – Member of Aniak Judicial Council:

10 brothers and sisters, 6 kids, 11 grandkids, serve as tribal judge for Aniak Tribe. Aniak has NO VPSO, no city police officers, just 2 troopers stationed working 2 weeks on/off. These 2 officers serve 25 villages from Nikolai to Lower Kalskag, west to Lime Village and Yukon to Russian Mission.

- **Better Response Times** - After hours calls are dispatched to Fairbanks or Bethel. When emergencies happen and we need protection from violent actions, we are concerned with slow response times due to dispatch. Tribes need to be able to deal with issues locally.
- **Tribal Jurisdiction** - Congress and DOI must make sure tribes have their jurisdiction to prevent and respond to crimes in their villages.
- **Non-Competitive Funding** - AK Tribes need permanent, direct, non-competitive based funding
- **Infrastructure/Housing** – we need funding for public safety infrastructure, law enforcement officers, tribal court personnel, AK based training and technical assistance.

Andrew Steven – Tribal Administrator for Atmautluak:

- **Non-Competitive Funding** - We have cops grants and other. The problem we have is our community is small, about 300 people, and everybody knows everybody. V
- **Training** - POs lack training, housing and weather is always unpredictable.
- **Infrastructure/Housing** - Safe house or multi-purpose building for S&R, TPOs and Fire Department. Should be a grant for matching on VPOs. The community is contracted through BIA. Infrastructure is where it starts, the internal needs to be fixed.

Jimmy Larson, Jr., Tribal Member of Chefornak Traditional Council:

- **Better Response Time** – I'm new to the council, problem I've noticed is crimes get committed and reported, but Troopers won't come out, saying they have to be serious crimes in order to come out. A lady was beat up by another woman, but troopers wouldn't come out. I think that's a pretty serious crime. We need them to come.

Richard Slats, Second Chief of Chevak Traditional Council:

- **Tribal Courts** – We went through tribal court assessment and working on our tribal courts. We want to get our tribal courts up and running so we can work with our people and not send them away.
- **Solutions Taking Too Long** - Growing up, had a respected Elder who would ring church bell for curfew, and we all went home.
- **Infrastructure/Housing** - Council eventually hired police officers with handcuff and batons but we had no holding cells. As community leaders we come and say what needs to be done, but then we go home, and things go on the same way. We don't have the services at home to work with them. They'll do the same things we put them away for.
- **Work with Community Members** - I grew up when we thought dysfunctional families were normal. Our kids are raising kids. Respect is lost and we need help. These are comments from a Tribal Council meeting last week. The kids who broke into our businesses are now the PS officers. Communities hiring criminals, we need help. Three break ins to our tribal council about a week ago, response time still hasn't happened. Our community is dry, but alcohol still runs rampant. Up and coming law enforcement agents get intimidated by certain people in our community and might be reason nothing is done to them. Weeks ago, there was a headline that villages hire criminals – this is no surprise to us. We are missing, our youth and children are being neglected, crimes happen when they don't go home at night.
- **Partners / Kids Need Help** - OCS need to come and listen with Department of Juvenile Justice.

Roberta Murphy – President of Chuloonawick Native Village:

I'm now in Kotzebue, but it's the same everywhere, same problems.

- **Training** - Our VPOs hired by city with limited funds, don't get trained, then burn out because locals don't like law enforcement and they are treated badly. Lack of funding to send for training. No funds for the training the need for service, and to handle the burn out.
- **Roving Program** - If we had inter-village VPO program you'd have your own people, but not from your village. Like the VPSO program.

Amanda Phillips, Clerk of Crooked Creek Village Council:

- We need healthcare, don't get good service from YKHS, want to go with ANMHC.

Herman Hootch, Tribal Court Judge, Emmonak Tribal Council:

We have a Trooper, VPSO and police in Emmonak.

- **Training** - Need to secure crime scenes.
- **Partnership Agreements** - We don't have a TPO so have to ask troopers or VPSO to help and we don't have agreement to use them.
- **Tribal Courts** - Need MOUs for tribal courts too.

Oswaldo Enrique Escarate, Tribal Administrator of Georgetown Tribal Council:

- **Better Response Time** - response time is slow, inadequate, or irresponsible.
- **Solutions Taking Too Long** - Been hearing this since 2010, and when Indian Law and Order Commission visited. Their report said same thing, and ironically the title was The Time Is Now.
- **Training** - We tried to work with State Troopers. Even started training program to collaborate, but it fell away. Conversations needs to be about government to government understanding.
- **Compacting** - OCS compact with ICWA is great. We take care of our own children.

Agnes Housler, Member of Iqurmiut Traditional Council:

Violent crimes being hidden in attics or under houses. Then along came AVCP and the VPSO program and the tribal COPS funding, and we're grateful. I was a VPSO myself and I've experienced these factors:

- **Infrastructure/Housing** - no place to live for VPSO duty;
- **Non-Competitive Funding** - always low funding or not enough, or its competitive; even with pay, our officers qualify for public assistance.
- **Partnership Agreements** - we often work through a MOA with AVCP and troopers – whoever we deal with. When crime happens, we don't think "we don't have a MOA", we don't think about needing a piece of paper to work with each other.
- **Tribal Jurisdiction** - Our tribes don't have jurisdiction or often the land to protect or keep our people safe.
- Agnes thanked the State Troopers for finding the person responsible for the murder of her cousin, Sophie Sergei.

Meeting Break for Lunch at 12:10 pm - Reconvene 1:40 pm

Jennifer Nicholas, Tribal Court Clerk of Kasigluk Traditional Council:

- **Training** - 6 TPOs working part time, 4 hours – not one has gone to training. Need training resources.

Daniel Mute, Member of Kipnuk Traditional Council:

- **Liquor Store** - Other people are bringing alcohol and drugs to us, we don't make this stuff. How can we confront the sources of brewing alcohol.

Ronald David, Vice President of Kongiganak Traditional Council:

We are on the coast of the SW region of Alaska, population is about 500-700 and are all Yup'ik. We have a school from K-12, with 3-4 tribal police officers, they are the first responders.

- **Training** - People are quitting from the position with a high turnover rate on TPOs. How can we train to reduce the stress, the community familiarity, the burnout? We have no VPSO.

Jacob Black, Native Village of Napakiak:

We need to have other people present our problems, we have 56 villages and there are many.

- **Liquor Store** - The liquor store is our main problem, not just in one village but all 56 villages within AVCP.
- **Better Response Time** - We call the troopers who are supposed to help our villages. We have 2 TPOs and they are the first responders to handle the situation as best as they can.
- **Non-Competitive and Permanent Funding** - Villages should receive funding if they request it. Not just for one year, but to keep coming.

Sharon Williams, Tribal Administrator for Napaskiak:

A woman in jail tried to commit suicide and almost succeeded but the TPOs brought her back to life, but she couldn't manage herself, and now she's back in jail. It's a cycle we have to break.

- **Better Response Time** - YKHC hire a night time on call person.
- **Liquor Store** - Bethel is not even prepared to have a liquor store. Give us time before opening a liquor store. I called Alcohol Control Board and asked if it was legal to buy liquor with a tribal ID; it isn't so why are they doing it?
- **Treatment Centers** - YKCC is overcrowded, there's a long list for alcohol treatment, a long list of deaths at CWOW.
- **Infrastructure/Housing** - Our people have homes, but they are homeless because they don't want to go home when alcohol is very available. We hear that 'we need to learn how to drink' but why do it all of a sudden.

Rose Cheemuk, Tribal Administrator for Native Village of Bill Moore Slough:

- **Better Response Time** - We have no VPSO, just a trooper that covers other villages. The time for transportation and response.
- **Solutions Taking Too Long** - Since I was small, we've had problems with alcohol, neglect (kids put up in the attic) and sex abuse. We still have to hide people in other homes. We never used to lock, but now we have deadbolts and 2x4s. Where's our protection? There are so many assault people don't want to report because they say nothing will be done, and my partner will abuse me again because I reported. People get out of jail and go do the same thing. We're reaching out to you for help – when will we get this? Ever since we've been small, it's been happening.

Tracy Simeon – Tribal Administrator for Native Village of Chuathbaluk:

We don't have law enforcement, it's myself and a couple of council members that do respond to emergencies. The ones responding are risking their own lives to help a brother, sister, uncle or aunt.

- **Better Response Time** - We live 10 miles from our nearest hub of Aniak and it takes a trooper 3-4 hours to respond. AK tribes do and should have authority to deal with public safety locally.
- **Non-Competitive and Permanent Funding** - AK needs permanent, non-competitive based funding because most of our funding is based on population.

Annie Pete, Council Member for Native Village of Eek:

- **Training** - Everyone has the same problem with Alcohol, no VPSOs, and our two trainees for VPSO just quit.
- **Infrastructure** - Search and Rescue lack of funding and vehicles, sometimes volunteers are not available.

George Bright, Sr. President and VPSO for Native Village of Goodnews Bay:

- **Solutions Taking Too Long** - I am with the tribal council and am a VPSO for over 20 years. I hear the same story on a year to year basis. When are public safety problems going to stop. With the AVCP VPSO program used to have well over 30, and now we're down to 5. AVCP has 56 villages, so basically we have no law enforcement. How are we going to end this problem?
- **Roving Program** - Eliminating the Roving VPSO is a problem. What can this panel do, what recommendations are being made, will the VPSO program be made better or will we lose it? I don't want to see it go... VPSOs are vital.
 - Julie Kitka: Assume the VPSO program is going to evolve. Ask what you want from law enforcement, what you want from public safety, it needs equipment, it needs training. Tell the panel what you need and ask for the world. Be really clear telling them what you need to keep your communities safe.

Della Hunt, Tribal Administrator for Native Village of Hamilton:

- **Infrastructure/Housing** - the two small jail cells in our community are not sufficient for the influx of crime. We are using old buildings for tribal court hearings, with foundations that are rotting. We need monies to build tribal court facilities buildings or hold tribal court.
- **Interdiction** - There is more crime because of the importation of alcohol and drugs.
- **Non-Competitive Funding** - We have expenses for TPOs. We asked the troopers if they can reimburse the cost of TPO hours, but they can't.
- **Tribal Courts** - We use the tribal offices to hold court hearings, so we have to wait until the employees have left the building, after 5 pm, sometimes running until 10 pm. Build a consortium between communities to network and plan.
- **Training** - Provide training for trained response teams.

Tamah Tomaganak-Moses, Tribal Judge for Native Village of Hooper Bay:

- **Non-Competitive Funding** - Alaska tribes need permanent and non-competitive funding for training and technical assistance. We need the flexibility to do what works to protect our members and communities.

Ferdinand Cleveland, Jr., Tribal Administrator for Native Village of Kwinhagak:

- **Retention** - Biggest challenge is keeping TPOs employed. They are younger guys, we need Alaska qualified applicants. With background checks we just can't hire anyone.
- **Roving Program** - Inter-village program would be helpful to work in a village that is next to home.
- **Training** - Training for local judges would be beneficial. Our councils can get training on regulations to enforce deportation of alcohol.

Clifford Fitka, Tribal Court Delegate of Native Village of Marshall:

- **Non-Competitive Funding** - I was disheartened when the money from DOJ was already disbursed and only went to 8 villages. The State is not assisting villages with revenue-sharing, so the city of Marshall and the two tribes there are trying to fund police officers. We've had to use citizen arrest.
- **Generational Trauma** - I hope there's something more that is going to help the villages out here. We were not always like this. My parents were the first people to be taken away from their people and brought to boarding schools. There was a link of love and teaching that was broken

for my parents and their generation. A lot of traditional values were lost. My parent's generation was hurting. We need pride back on our people. We need protection, and we need prevention. We need to be talking about generational trauma.

- **First Responder Equipment** - I was a VPO for 6 years in Mt. Village. I went in with a tape recorder and a can of mace and that was all I had against people with guns and knives.
- **Cold Cases Backlog** - A young girl called "Pretty" was raped and killed. Her rape kit wasn't even done. It's one of hundreds of rape kits sitting on a shelf. If this happened in a city, it wouldn't sit on the shelf that long. We used to be considered the highest socially and in our carving among the Eskimo peoples. For you people that still have your language, hold on to it, don't lose it. Bring back pride into our people.

Mark Leary, Development of Operations, Native Village of Napaimuit:

- **NR Infrastructure for Transportation** - I brought you a picture worth 1000 words that is representative of our region. I'm here to talk about the safety of our travelers in the region. Who do the troopers call when someone is missing? We've looked for a lot of missing women, we've seen a lot of bad things happen to women. The travel on roads we mark, or fly. Last year for the first time, I thought 'yeah, we need help'. We've tried to do a lot ourselves and we've done a lot, but it's time that we need help. We rely on an ancient system of overland trails to get us where we need to go. People in the rest of America jump in their cars and visit their families and go shopping. The people of our region use the natural resources transportation system for a basic need – to get food. For many people getting subsistence food is more important than jobs.
- **Climate Change** - Because we use our NR undeveloped transportation system, we are more exposed to the dangers of weather, and the dangers of climate change. Last year for the first time we had a late freeze up, two back to back record warm months, 40% less ice in the river, earliest spring break up on record in Bethel and we are losing people. We rescued 3 and recovered 2. We need to tell this to the works and maybe it's time to start asking for extra help. A big part of public safety is keeping our people safe as they move around our country.

Andrew John, Tribal Administrator for Village of Newtok:

- **Infrastructure/Personnel** - It takes a lot of commitment to do the jobs we do. I'm a combat veteran of the Marine Corps, and I put my boots on the ground. We've come a long way but there's a lot more to go. We need more support for our troopers, we need more personnel in our communities.
- **Training** - When I arrived in Newtok I came to a lawless community, ruling by fear. We need more training for our officers.
 - Julie Kitka: tell us about unique partnership in your community with the Reserve?
 - Andrew: we are in the process of relocating our entire community of Newtok to a new home called Mertarvik. It's hard to say so if you butcher it the first time, you got it right. Our new home is taking great shape. We can see those people burning the midnight oil. I love my people and that is why I came home, to give them the voice that they deserve, and that is why I am here.
 - Julie: This community applied for a military readiness program, 20-some reservists responded, and reported it was one of the most rewarding experiences of their lives.
 - Tara Sweeney: stand proud by the new name and make sure people say it right.

Estelle Timmer, Native Village of Paitmute:

51% of Alaska Native women are victims of violent crime. Over half of the women in this room could be a survivor. Everyone in this room is a descendant from ancestors living on these lands for thousands of years. I'm a traditional healer, and I want to help people who offend, because they are likely victims of crime themselves. Every single one of us has this network of relations in our communities. That's what our communities are made of, our relationship with each other and with our lands.

- **Solutions Taking Too Long** - The relationship we've had together as Yupik people and the federal government obviously isn't working. We have the same problems in each of our communities. According to a study by the FBI, Alaska is the most dangerous state in the US. We've thrived here for thousands of generations and we are the people who came from those survivors. These are our families, these are our communities, these are our relations. I want to see us successful in living again. An Elder once told me, Our life is a moral act between responsibility and respect. To regain that, we have to have more innovative programs. What's going on is not working.
- **Roving Programs** - We need to go back to more community-based programs. If the VPSO program isn't working then cross-deputize people so they can uphold the state law, with the tools and training they need, in our own communities. Our culture is based on restorative practices, what we do is lift each other up. We are not critical of our people, we cultivate the behavior we want from our people, and by doing so we will be successful.

Anthony Ulak, Tribal President for Native Village of Scammon Bay:

- **Training** - I'm a former VPSO, and we need more training in the programs for our officers. We have 4 police officers and work with AVCP tribal justice department.
- **Interdiction** - alcohol and drugs are being brought in to our villages by snow machine and airplane. It's hard for us to stop without personnel.

Elizabeth Asicksik, Acting Judge for Native Village of Tununak:

Men are victims of violent crime too.

- **Training** – we have only one police officer and we need more. Training should be mandatory for all police officers in our villages so they will know what to expect.
- **Better Response Time** – it takes too long for officers to respond, and they need vehicles.
- **Work With the Community** – Leaders need to be positive and help our communities.

Robert Pitka, Tribal Administrator for Nunakauyak Traditional Council:

- **Non-Competitive and Permanent Funding** - It's due to lack of funding. We are running in a deficit but still have VPOs. We can't run without officers in our villages.
- **Interdiction** – we have a real problem with drug and alcohol importation. We can't give up and we won't give up.
- **Infrastructure/Housing** - but we can't function without the jail cells or a public safety building.

Bernard Afcan, Tribal Council Member for Nunam Iqua Tribe:

Our village made headlines when a fire took the lives of three family members, and three months later a boating accident resulted in losing 5 members of the same family in this short time. In 2016 an engineer was assaulted in our tribal building, and the state shut down the project for our building due to lack of law enforcement. And an armed citizen walked through the village with an armed rifle after a fight.

- **Training** – we are not trained to handle these types of situations.

- **Non-Competitive and Permanent Funding** – our tribe has applied for COPS funds but has been denied for not having established law enforcement.
- **Infrastructure / Tribal Courts** – Public Safety building is very old and can't be used due to the safety features. Probations are not monitored locally, and protective orders have no one to enforce them. Community members face danger just to support themselves and others.
- **Better Response Times** - We rely on Alaska State Troopers, but their post is 18 miles upriver. Larger villages have higher demand; it takes days, weeks and even months for AST to respond, and most times there is no response.
- **Tribal Jurisdiction** – it is time for our tribes to have the authority to deal with public safety. Our tribes have over 60 years of experience with compacting. We need the flexibility to design a solution that works best for our people. The CHAP model is successful because it fits the needs of our region.

Joanne Jackson, Tribal Court Judge for Organized Village of Kwethluk:

- **Non-Competitive Funding** - We need more funding for tribal judges.
- **Training** – we need training for our officers. Going to touch on what Rose mentioned this morning. I had to suffer through people that come and go, experience death through them, abuses through them. Me along with my siblings had to find a safe room to hide or under a pile of clothes. I'm speaking for the younger. If these things are not met, we need to think – where are they going to go?

Peter Evon, Executive Director of Orutsararmiut Native Council:

Land area of the Y-K Delta is 55,000 miles and has no road system. We use boats and planes and weather delays impact public safety response times. We take our role as a hub community very seriously.

- **Partnership Agreement** – we are working with the city police and troopers both based in Bethel. We have to build these systems together for the best chance of success.
- **Liquor Store/Interdiction** – Alcohol has a very heavy impact across a wide range of social welfare areas. It was a Bethel local-only vote, but people are returning to their villages with alcohol. Traditional alternatives include banishment. Banished residents are coming to Bethel and are becoming refugees in their own culture.
- **Tribal Courts** - NTJS feasibility study to start Bethel tribal police department and bolster tribal courts.
- **Infrastructure/Housing** – Need adequate compensation, equipment, vehicles and buildings for our officers. Compensation and benefits need to be competitive and commensurate with the cost of living in this region. Extreme housing shortage in our region was also counted as a priority.

Gloria Simeon, Orutsararmiut Native Council

- **Better Response Time** - Why is it the State is right there to ticket you for that one over limit, or to pull the salmon from your net, by they can't respond to crimes in our communities?
- **Partner Agreements** - Set up cooperative agreements so that it's a win-win for all of us. Your ICWA workers set our families up to fail and then they use it against us. We have judgement over our children and our families.

- **Tribal Courts** - That's what we're doing with our tribal courts, to get out people out of the system and bring them back home to learn who they are and how to be. There's no one to hear you. If you can run, where can you go to? There's no one.

A woman alone in a village with children is a vulnerable woman. We need to pay more attention because the women are the keepers of our knowledge, tradition and culture. We need to do a better job of protecting our women and our little girls. We need resources and we need help and we'll work with anyone willing to help.

Nicholai Stevens, Vice President for Oscarville Tribal Council:

- **Liquor Store** - I'm wondering if all 56 villages brought a resolution to shut down the alcohol in Bethel and brought it to the Bethel City Council if it would help the situation.

Margaret Guidry, President for Pitkas Point Traditional Council:

We've never, ever had a police officer in our community. We would really appreciate if we could have one.

- **Infrastructure/Housing** - our main concern is VPSO housing and holding cells, basically we lack infrastructure.
- **Better Response Time** – an alcohol bootlegger was turned away from our village by our council, we had to take action and were afraid for our lives, but we needed to protect our members. Troopers took days to respond and he would always get away.

Evan Andreanoff, President of Sleetmute Traditional Council:

Many have already covered what I wanted to raise.

- **Better Response Times** – everyone is speaking to how long it takes to get officers to our communities.
- **Solutions Taking Too Long** – I've been dealing with these issues since I was a little kid, we've all been in this same boat too long. It hurts me inside too see everyone like this – I have such a big heart for all my people. They may be from other villages, but they are still my people; I live off this river and they speak the same truth. No matter where you go it's all the same place. I want our kids to live strong and break this cycle. I may be young but I still have pride; I have kids myself and I don't want them to see this, I'm afraid they'll get run over by some drunk driver.

Frank Lupie, Council Member of Tuntutuliak Traditional Council:

- **Interdiction** – people get their alcohol from Bethel but then get into accidents and get hurt on the way home.
- **Training/Retention** – we hired 2 TPOs but they quit because of stress and the relational issues.

Middy Peter, President of Tuluksak Native Community:

- **Roving Program** – it would be good to have officers who can respond to more than one village.
- **Non-Competitive Funding** – it would be better if more officers could be paid from the COPS grant.

Veronica Olick, Tribal Administrator for Umkumiut Tribal Council:

I want to thank AVCP for helping us with our ICWA cases.

- **Training** – we don't have any properly trained VPSOs or TPOs. Health aides have to respond to emergencies. They shouldn't have to. I worked as a health aide for 5 years and I cared for our kids in school.
- **Better Response Time** – it sometimes takes troopers days to get to us, especially when only snow machine trails can be used.
- **Tribal Courts/Funding** – we need funding to develop our tribal courts.
- **Work With the Community** – I told them to stay in school, we're encouraging our Elders to teach our high school students. Our communities should teach traditional values and dancing.
- **Interdiction** – bootleggers come to our village and need to be stopped.

Bonnie Persson, Tribal Court Administrator, Upper Kalskag:

Everything can be changed if we look at them closely. All the federal regulations and the CFRs can be changed.

- **Infrastructure/Housing** - We need sub-regional public safety sites, with the regional site at AVCP.
- **Non-Competitive Funding** - we need it for compensation and benefits. We tried for a COPS grant three years ago and didn't get it, but our neighboring village got it. We need equality and sustainability. We need to look at alternate funding to make this happen. We are asking for equal services straight across the board; equality and sustainability for the future.

Phyllis Evan, Tribal Council President of Village of Lower Kalskag:

For our Tribal Council, we have our radios on 24/7. We respond along with our Community Health Aides. You have to always look for solutions when you feel stuck. If you don't look for solutions, you're stuck in that same cycle. We encourage our staff and our tribal council, we have a meeting at the end of this month and have the conversation on being dry. We're all related. If something happens down river or up river, we hurt. If something happens in your village, we hurt for you. We're all like a really big family. We watch on social media and we listen for what we need to hear. Don't stay in that same cycle, look for solutions.

Kimberly Joe – Yupiit of Andreafsky:

- **Solutions Taking Too Long** – Kimberly asked our elders to stand - on issues of public safety do it while they are still here, do it so they can see it. Thank you.



Closing Statements

Vivian Korthuis, CEO of AVCP –

Assistant Secretary Sweeney, thank you for responding to the invitation I sent to you last February to hold a listening session on public safety for the Tribes on the YK Delta. Since 2016 public safety has been the #1 priority of the region. AVCP has helped organize a Statewide VPSO Strategic Planning meeting, conducted a Public Facility Safety Assessment in our region, hosted a Public Safety Summit to bring together stakeholders in the region, and created a Public Safety Task Force. We have engaged partners at all levels including the DOI.

Today we heard directly from tribes about issues of public safety, and those issues that touch every family and community in our region. The tribes selected speakers to share with all of us their truths. This listening session has created the time and the space to listen. I would like to thank all of those who spoke and shared their story. All the issues that were brought up today are now on the table. We heard people mention personal hardships, the need for training law enforcement officers, housing, lack of funding and lack of public safety infrastructure needs as a few examples of what was brought out. Also hear tribes resolved to work together to find solutions. These are not new issues – they've occurred over lifetimes and generations.

What is new is the focus it has in the public eye. The visit of AG Barr to rural Alaska brought on a sense of urgency by declaring an emergency of law enforcement in Alaska. This is a turning point for our villages. In every community in our region, there is a right hand and a left hand. Whenever there is an emergency, the very first people called are the health aid and the VPSO or tribal police. In the majority of our communities, public safety resources don't exist. Communities are in crisis. I am asking all of us here today to open our minds and ask what each of us can do to address the crisis. We need a comprehensive public safety plan in rural AK that is well thought out, sustainable and address the long-term success of every rural community in Alaska.

It is going to be Important that this model have local control and address the needs of the tribes. Tribes have the authority to protect our people and our communities. We need to create a career path for our youth to become trained so that we have line of qualified applicants at every tribal police office in every community in our region. We need the infrastructure to support public safety. AVCP will continue to work on public safety with all of our partners. We are not asking anything less or anything more than any other community in Alaska or the US.

Specifically, AVCP is asking to demonstrate our ability to build and maintain a public service delivery model in the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta by compacting funding through multiple funding sources. That is our ask. As I have stated before, we are asking for protections and safety for our families and communities. We are literally – literally, every one of us did this today - standing up for ourselves and we are asking you to do the same. Again, thank you Assistant Secretary Tara Sweeney and the federal agencies for attending. With my testimony I am also submitting the AVCP public safety white paper with our proposal. Thank you.

Tara Sweeney, Assistant Secretary of Indian Affairs –

This was a very good day. It's the first day in a long path that I want to take together with all of you. As leadership in the AVCP region, it's important we do this together in partnership. You've stood up before

member of the White House, of the DOI, reps from the Senate and AFN, you've demonstrated you're willing to stand up and give a voice to those who do not have one. That takes courage and that takes leadership. It's by your example that we will take this information and work to craft a thoughtful and smart remedy and solutions we can work on together.

A couple of themes I heard today: Training; Need for infrastructure in housing and snow machines and equipment; Clear need for funding at state and federal level; Interdiction in alcohol and narcotics; Response time is inadequate; and that there is a need for wrap-around services for re-entry. There is also a need for behavioral and mental health resources of our first responders. It is our responsibility to make sure our communities respect those who serve, to protect our communities and our country. Thank you to the veterans who have served our country and a number have come from this region. Andrew John - don't compromise the name of your village.

I heard innovative suggestions like cross-deputization for criminal jurisdiction today. These are ideas that deserve some oxygen and sunlight. Base funding set aside for tribes for public safety infrastructure, and updating tribal codes, and a call for sub-regional strike forces. When we were in Nome we heard about generational trauma, and the need for trauma-informed for our law enforcement professionals. I also heard the importance of investigation – our families need closure. You asked if I would stand with you and help provide that voice. As your Assistant Secretary, I will never abandon you. I will always continue to stand with you and walk with you to come to a solution, with the federal government and our tribes and tribal organizations, and to engage the state of Alaska as well.

Doug Hoescher, Intergovernmental Affairs –

Thank You. I've learned a lot and it's made me a better person. I saw a lot of crying, bravery, frustration and hope and that's powerful. There is a good mix of elders, youth, men and women here. We are proud to join you. I have heard it takes a big heart to take care of a small community. It takes pride. We want to work together. Women are the keepers of culture, men have a strong role and many of you are here today. We have a lot of heart for our people. We want to make a difference for tomorrow. We heard we need a plan, but it needs to work for your region and your state. We need help. Training. We want to change systems and models and regulations to work alongside you and work smartly. We want to look at things differently and not be afraid to change the model. Need for data, report crimes when it happens and better data sharing across the federal system and with tribes.

Jennifer Lichter, Domestic Policy Council –

My feeling is that I'm so humbled by your stories, your strength and commitment to your people, humbled to hear of tragedies you've endured but by your resilience. Wanted to reach out and hold your hands. Your testimonies were way more impactful and effective today than everybody in meetings I sit in rooms and talk to every day. You are great advocates for your communities, and this was a very powerful day. We heard you. We heard you name your villages and tribes, your parents and grandparents, many of who have been victims of crime. Thank you for being so clear about your needs. When I get back to my office in the WH you will be at the forefront of our minds. I won't forget my first trip to Alaska and want to share it with my colleagues in DC.

Kate McGregor, Deputy Chief of Staff, DOI –

I get to work with Tara every day. Today felt very special because you brought us into your families. Other issues: alcohol treatment, cross-deputization, roving VPSO, risking your own lives, sometimes against your own family members, thank you for when you take that stand. For everyone who stood up,

thank you. We're going to borrow all of the strength we saw here today and learn from your courage in what you've shared and work together to be informed by what you shared here today to craft a plan of action for this generation so your elders can see a difference.

Mirtha Beadle, ANA –

Thank you, my heart is full of all of you. This isn't the first time we've heard about public safety, but I personally appreciate you putting a face to this, for candidly speaking about your communities, your desired and hopes. We know people who can be helpful back in DC. We know we need to be more embracing and helpful. These conversations were not in vain. We carry your stories, your hopes and desires back with us. In partnership we can do this. Help us push. We want to be able to work with you so thank you.

Julie Kitka, AFN –

I want to publicly thank Vivian and all her hard work, Tara and your team. It's an incredible opportunity in front of us, let's make this happen.

Meeting end approximately 4:50 pm.

