

SUPPORTING ALASKA’S CURRENT SYSTEM OF SELECTION AND RETENTION OF STATE COURT JUDGES

RESOLUTION NO. 2015-24

WHEREAS, the Alaska Judicial Council (AJC) is an independent citizens’ commission established by the Alaska Constitution to screen applicants for judicial vacancies, nominate the most qualified applicants for appointment by the governor, evaluate the performance of sitting judges, recommend to voters whether judges should be retained, and conduct research related to the administration of justice in Alaska; and

WHEREAS, the Alaska Constitution provides that the AJC shall have seven members, including three attorneys appointed by the Alaska Bar Association, three non-attorneys appointed by the governor and confirmed by the legislation, and the Chief Justice of the Alaska Supreme Court, who acts as the chairperson; and

WHEREAS, through the AJC process the Alaska Constitution created a merit-based system for appointing judges while retaining accountability to the voters, and this Alaska system is widely considered to be one of the best state judicial selection processes in the United States; and

WHEREAS, Tanana Chiefs Conference does not support any amendments that would change Alaska’s merit-based system for selecting judges into a partisan political process controlled by the governor and in the long term would inevitably diminish the quality and fairness of the state judiciary; and

WHEREAS, Alaska Native Tribes, tribal organizations, and individual Alaska Native subjected to Alaska’s civil or criminal judicial system are best served by an independent state judiciary, selected on merit.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors support Alaska’s current system of selection and retention of the state court judges; and

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Directors oppose any attempt to amend the Alaska Constitution to alter the composition of the Alaska Judicial Council to politicize the judicial selection process.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED that the Directors direct staff to provide guidance to the Tribes on retention of judges prior to elections.

CERTIFICATION

I hereby certify that this resolution was duly passed by the Tanana Chiefs Conference Full Board of Directors on March 19, 2015 at Fairbanks, Alaska and a quorum was duly established.



by: Upper Tanana Subregion



PJ Simon
Secretary/Treasurer