



VALUES IN ACTION  
SEALASKA

SEALASKA  
HERITAGE

SEARHC  
SOUTHEAST ALASKA REGIONAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM



January 19, 2017

## **NATIVE GROUPS RALLY AGAINST PROPOSED HOMELESSNESS ORDINANCE**

The presidents of Sealaska Heritage Institute (SHI), Sealaska, the Central Council Tlingit & Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska (CCTHITA) and the Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) have written a letter petitioning the Juneau Assembly to reject a proposed ordinance to illegalize camping on private property in the downtown district.

The proposal—an effort to prevent homeless people from sleeping in retail doorways and other spaces—would criminalize citizens who are the most impoverished residents and who suffer with physical, mental and social illnesses, the groups wrote.

“This ordinance would impose penalties on citizens who have the least capability to pay fines, ultimately leading to their incarceration. We believe the issue can be resolved in a humane and compassionate manner with the establishment of a site for camping elsewhere in the City,” the letter said.

The letter was signed by SHI President Rosita Worl, CCTHITA President Richard J. Peterson, Sealaska President and CEO Anthony Mallott and SEARHC President and CEO Charles Clement.

The groups asked the city to instead consider a recommendation to the Alaska Mental Health Trust Authority that the proceeds from their pending sale of trust lands to the Develop Juneau Now LLC in downtown Juneau be dedicated to funding a camping site for those citizens who are not eligible to utilize existing shelters.

“We have confidence that the City can develop and implement innovative solutions to address this issue in the same way the City created a land base in the Gastineau Channel for the display of a monumental whale sculpture,” the letter said.

Sealaska Heritage Institute is a private, nonprofit founded in 1980 to promote cultural diversity and cross-cultural understanding through public services and events. SHI also conducts social scientific and public policy research and advocacy that promotes Alaska Native arts, cultures, history and education

statewide. It is governed by a Board of Trustees and guided by a Council of Traditional Scholars and a Native Artists Committee. Its mission is to perpetuate and enhance Tlingit, Haida, and Tsimshian cultures of Southeast Alaska.

CCTHITA is a tribal government representing over 30,000 Tlingit and Haida Indians worldwide. It is a sovereign entity and has a government-to-government relationship with the United States.

Sealaska is the regional Native institution established under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act of 1971 (ANCSA). More than 22,000 Tlingit, Haida and Tsimshian shareholders own Sealaska. Sealaska's purpose is to strengthen people, culture and homelands through Values In Action.

SEARHC is a non-profit tribal health consortium of 18 Native communities, which serves the health interests of the Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, and other Native people of Southeast Alaska. It is one of the oldest and largest Native-run health organizations in the nation.

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