



ALASKA FEDERATION OF NATIVES
2019 ANNUAL CONVENTION
RESOLUTION 19-16

- TITLE:** A RESOLUTION TO RAISE AWARENESS AND GAIN SUPPORT TO BACKHAUL HOUSEHOLD HAZARDOUS WASTE OUT OF RURAL ALASKA COMMUNITIES AND TO RESPONSIBLY RECYCLE THEM
- WHEREAS:** The Alaska Federation of Natives (AFN) is the largest statewide Native organization in Alaska and its membership includes 191 federally recognized tribes, 171 village corporations, 12 regional corporations and 12 regional nonprofit and tribal consortiums that contract and compact to run federal and state programs; and
- WHEREAS:** the mission of AFN is to enhance and promote the cultural, economic, and political voice of the entire Alaska Native community; and
- WHEREAS:** all communities produce waste such as spent batteries and electronics which can be hazardous to human health and the environment when they are improperly disposed of and subsequently deteriorated; and
- WHEREAS:** there are no safe ways to discard household hazardous waste in rural landfills, as rural Class III landfills are unlined, often unpermitted, and the infrastructure is not designed to prevent contaminant release into the surrounding water, land, and air; and
- WHEREAS:** AFN represents a group of people who are intimately tied to the land through year-round subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering, and whose subsistence activities provide a physical, mental, and spiritual connection to the land; and
- WHEREAS:** Alaska communities do not have, and cannot afford to construct, the storage infrastructure to separate and keep these wastes indefinitely; and
- WHEREAS:** because communities cannot indefinitely store these wastes, they must transport them to recyclers, employing the act of backhauling, or the hauling back, of wastes; and
- WHEREAS:** rural Alaska communities are small, remote, have relatively little economic base and are unable on their own to afford the full cost of waste management, transport, and recycling required to backhaul these wastes to recycling companies; and
- WHEREAS:** substantial waste management and backhaul expertise is available in some individual communities and working models for regionally-coordinated efforts exist, backhaul Alaska, a statewide coordination program, is in pilot phase and

through that program the knowledge needed to efficiently, and sustainably provide safe backhaul opportunities to all our rural communities exists, but to do so successfully will require political will and support in developing the effort.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the delegates of the 2019 Annual AFN Convention will advocate for better management of these wastes that pose serious risks to our health and subsistence way of life when hazardous waste is discarded in rural communities; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that AFN will urge local, state, federal, and private partners to join us in supporting household hazardous waste backhaul programs and projects that can safely collect, store, transport, and recycle these wastes; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that it is recommended that AFN will form a rural waste backhaul subcommittee to explore potential avenues in which AFN member organizations can contribute to safe and affordable backhaul of these wastes.



Julie Kitka
President

SUBMITTED BY: KAWERAK, INC.
COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION: PASS
CONVENTION ACTION: PASS