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**Governor Bill Walker**  
**STATE OF ALASKA**

August 12, 2016

Ms. Eileen Ewan  
President  
Gulkana Village Council  
P.O. Box 254  
Gakona, AK 99586

Ms. Michelle Anderson  
President  
Ahtna, Incorporated  
P.O. Box 649  
Glennallen, AK 99588

Dear Ms. Ewan and Ms. Anderson,

One month ago I was privileged to visit Gulkana Village. I brought key leaders in my Administration along with me, and we were all deeply moved by the gravesites we solemnly visited, by the wonderful people we met and with whom we shared a meal, by the story we heard of a bisected village, and by the depth of pain you expressed associated with decades of impasse. I promised you a response in thirty days to your appeal to rectify a historical wrong.

As we flew back to Anchorage that day, I asked my team to find a legal and expeditious way to return sacred lands, currently in the hands of the State, to the village. I also instructed them to account for the transportation mission needs associated with the existing bridge, and for reasonable alternative public access to the Gulkana River in any solution they brought forward to me. I also instructed my team to include a public process for those impacted by any steps we take to have an opportunity to be heard and provide input. I am pleased to report my team has answered my challenge with a plan that I firmly believe can accomplish the long overdue and unquestionably just goal of returning the land you value so much.

As you know, the State is subject to the legal constraints of today, embodied in State and federal statute. This means the path to our final goal will require some time, some careful, transparent negotiation, legal steps, and a public process to receive input from those impacted. As such, I propose as a next step that we assemble a team consisting of Administration, Ahtna, and Gulkana Village leaders to tackle these process and communication challenges together, while staying on an aggressive timeline. The first meeting of this team should occur in a matter of weeks, and of course,

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the team must fully vet the plan presented to me and that I personally approved to go forward to you.

I am asking Paulette Schuerch to coordinate our Administration participation in this effort. She will be contacting you shortly to get the full team effort underway.

Thank you again for the privilege of visiting Gulkana Village. I value the friendships made and renewed that day, I look forward to hearing good progress reports, and I treasure the hope to ultimately share together in the just and final resolution of this matter.

Sincerely,



Bill Walker  
Governor

cc: Paulette Schuerch, Special Advisor, Tribal Affairs, Office of the Governor