

# Alaska's Time To Thrive



**Indigenized THRIVE:**  
*Transform, Heal, and Renew by  
Investing in a Vibrant Economy.*

*Edited by Alaska Just Transition Collective  
in partnership with the Green New Deal Network*





# Acknowledgements & Values

**The lands, waters, and air are eternal.** For millennia they have nurtured the growing bodies of our plant and animal relatives, they have given us shelter and warmth, they have provided us with food and fresh waters.

The knowledge systems of Indigenous Peoples are based on thousands of years of relationship to their homelands – living, learning, and growing a deep connection to place. Every piece of Mother Earth you step on in Alaska has been known, loved and named by Indigenous Peoples.

Acknowledging Indigenous Peoples as the original caretakers of these lands and waters is a first step in reconciling historical injustices, supporting current Indigenous Sovereignty, and uplifting Indigenous knowledge systems. Here is an example of those living in what is now called Anchorage might use to acknowledge the peoples of the land:



**Dena'inaq elnen'aq' gheshtnu ch'q'u yeshdu.**  
I live and work on the land of the Dena'ina.

*Translated by Joel Isaak and Sondra Shaginoff-Stuart*

These Principles have been adapted from the "Movement Generation Zine," and inspired by Indigenous Environmental Network's Indigenous Principles of Just Transition. We used these both as a base of knowledge and guidance for our own Alaskan version and we thank Indigenous Environmental Network and Movement Generation for their leadership and the work they have done to share these resources with diverse communities.

**What the hands do the heart learns**

**If it is the right thing to do, we have every right to do it**

**If we are not prepared to govern, we are not prepared to win**

**If it is not soulful it is not strategic**

**Indigenous wisdom shows us the path forward**

# Alaska Just Transition Collective & The Green New Deal



The Alaska Just Transition Collective is a growing collective of Alaska based organizations with a spectrum of focuses working to support Alaska along a path toward a post-oil economy, an Indigenized Regenerative Economy.

In January 2020 we were honored to gather on the lands of the Lower Tanana Dene. **The Alaska Just Transition Summit** facilitated Indigenous and non-Indigenous collaboration to build critical thinking around economic and social transition, construct a popular shared vision for the future, and create collective strategies that can move us forward.



 **Kohtr'elneyh**

**Kohtr'elneyh** means "We Remember" in Benhti' Kenaga', the Lower Tanana Dene Athabascan language, which is the language of the Benhti' People that lived near what is now known as Fairbanks.



**The Green New Deal Network** is a National coalition of grassroots organizations, labor, and climate and environmental justice organizations growing a movement to pass local, state, and national policies that create millions of family-sustaining union jobs, ensure racial and gender equity, and take action on climate at the scale and scope the crisis demands.



# What is the Thrive Agenda?

**The THRIVE Agenda** has taken many forms, but at heart it is a vision of a just future put to paper. In late 2020, it was brought to Congress as a resolution, and it will be proposed as a Bill this springtime. If it is passed by Congress, we would see massive changes in funding and investments, as well as climate adaptation and support to vulnerable communities.

It has been formed by the work of the Green New Deal Network, in community with hundreds of frontline grassroots organizations (*including us!*). It is an economic recovery bill for post-COVID crisis, pre-Climate crisis reconstruction that truly prioritizes racial, economic and gender justice.



**The THRIVE proposes a Federal investment of \$1 Trillion per year for 10 years**, which is what is needed to create 15 million good jobs while cutting emissions by 50% by 2030 and confronting racial, gender, economic, and environmental injustice. At least 40% of that annual investment will go straight to frontline communities, workers, and communities of color. It honors leadership of frontline communities and our Native Tribes and Nations. It achieves this through the framework of 8 pillars, or what we call, branches.

**The THRIVE Act is an opportunity**...for our Tribal leadership and our frontline communities-- who know the stakes of the climate crisis and also hold our climate solutions-- to see ourselves in a Bill that promises a safe and healthy future with quality work for generations to come. The THRIVE Act is an opportunity to envision what our Just Transition (Kohtr'elneyh) work has been building, and to bring forward generations of cultural knowledge and Tribal leadership into this desperate and important moment or recovery and healing for the country.



**hbenenqel'anch**  
*opportunity*

*Dena'ina translation by Peter Kalifornsky*

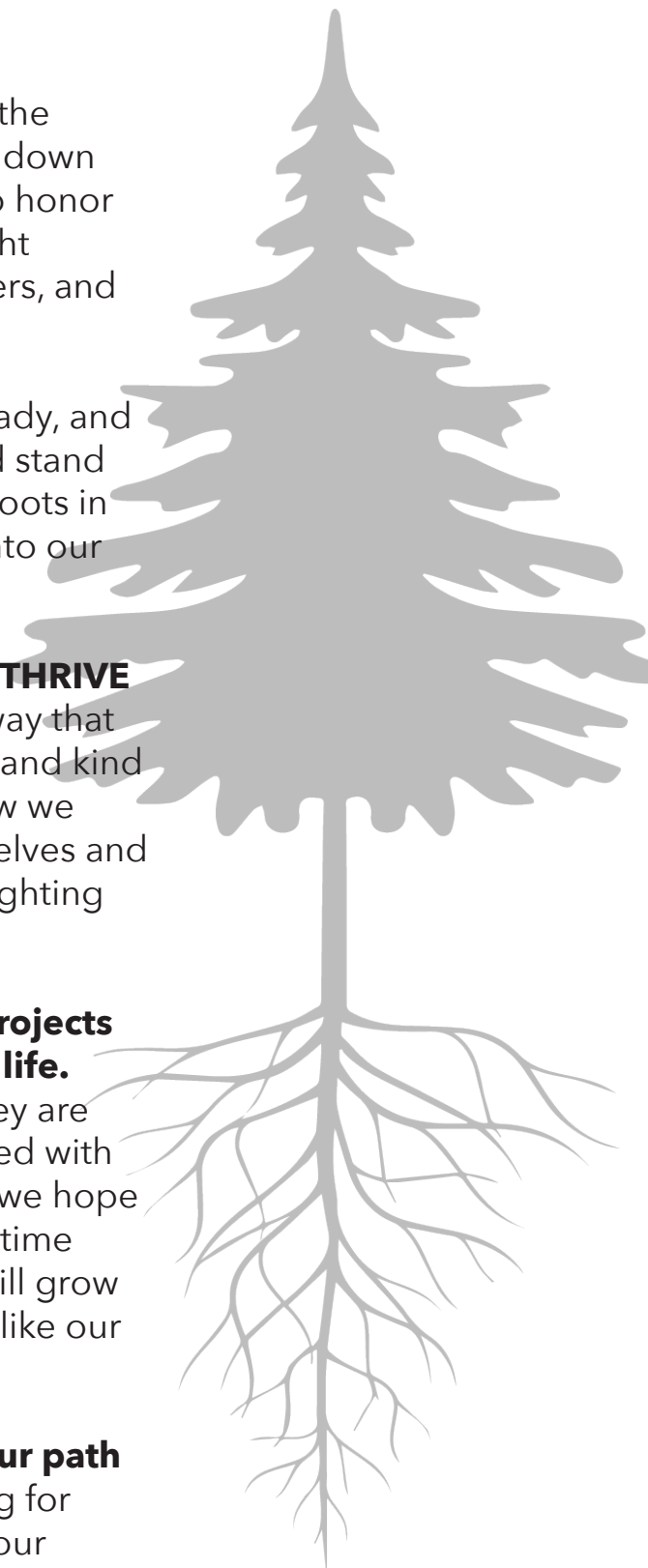
**Our Roots are our values.** In our land acknowledgement, we are sure to also honor the generations of wisdoms and teaching passed down to us from our grandparent's grandparents. To honor the land, is to honor our ancestors and the right relationship they formed with their lands, waters, and animal relatives.

**Our Trunk is our peoples.** We are strong, steady, and determined. We take pride in our cultures and stand tall. Our spirits are fed by our values and our roots in Alaska, as it is our role to bring those values into our lives and communities.

**Our Branches are like these "Pillars" of the THRIVE Agenda.** They are our goals, articulated in a way that reminds us that we must advocate for the just and kind world we want to live in. Our branches are how we stretch ourselves to bring out the best in ourselves and in our peoples, by choosing what is just and fighting for what is right.

**Our Leaves are the community and Tribal projects and programs that bring these branches to life.** They are the best expression of our values, they are supported by our peoples, and they are aligned with our goals. Our community conversations that we hope to have around the THRIVE agenda are springtime buds right now, but with time we know they will grow and become good medicine for our peoples, like our spruce tips are.

**The Sunlight on our tree is our vision and our path forward.** It is the wellness that we are reaching for and the healing that we deserve. We want all our communities to soak in this warm healing light.



# Transition is inevitable. Justice is not.

The terms used throughout this zine are one way for our communities to learn together as we create shared language around transitions in our regions, tribes and communities. **Just Transition is a framework for a shift to an economy that is ecologically sustainable, equitable and just for all Alaskans. The THRIVE Agenda turns that into policy.**

Just Transition strategies were first forged by labor unions and environmental justice groups who saw the need to phase out the industries harming workers, community health, and the planet, while also providing accessible pathways for workers to transition to new livelihoods.



## Ch'arok'ii

*We are listening together*

*Gwich'in K'yaa (language) translation by Rochelle Adams*

This original concept of Just Transition was rooted in building alliances between workers in polluting industries and fence-line and frontline communities. Building on that history, Just Transition represents a set of aligned strategies to transition whole communities toward thriving economies and provide dignified, productive, and ecologically sustainable livelihoods that are governed directly by workers and communities.

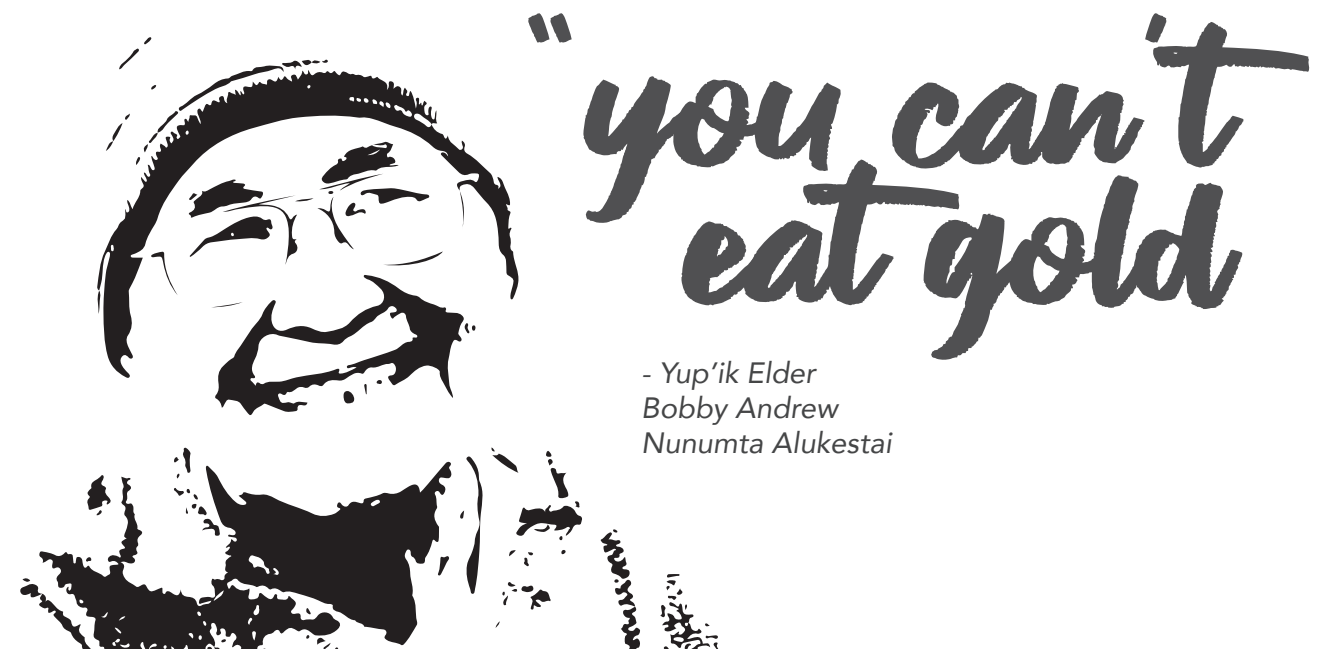
**Traditional knowledge is what Indigenous people of a given place, based on experience and adaptation, have developed over time, and continue to develop.** This knowledge is used to sustain the people, their society, their culture, their place and the genetic resources necessary for the continued survival.

The Just Transition framework upholds relationships that stem from time immemorial, and must recognize it was not people who governed the land, but rather the land and the spiritual beings acknowledge the depth of Indigenous knowledge rooted in the long inhabitation of a particular place offers answers as we search for a more satisfying and sustainable way to live.



## The Eight Branches of The Thrive Agenda

1. **Creating millions of good, safe jobs with access to unions**
2. **Building the power of workers to fight inequality**
3. **Investing in Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities**
4. **Strengthening and healing the nation-to-nation relationship with sovereign Native Nations**
5. **Combating environmental injustice and ensuring healthy lives for all**
6. **Averting climate and environmental catastrophe**
7. **Ensuring fairness for workers and communities affected by economic transitions**
8. **Reinvesting in public institutions that enable workers and communities to thrive**







## Creating millions of good, safe jobs with access to unions.

**Bees and Pollinators** - K'enedzeedze (*Denaakk'e*), Gandas'aají (*Tlingit*), Aanasnaadā (*Unangan, Qagaadam Tunuu*) • Bees are hard workers, community oriented, and matriarchal. They look after young ones collectively, and most of all they dance whenever they can! Our ecosystems rely on pollinators, and their work carries the life of our landscapes. Their contributions to our lands and waters benefit us all.

**Unions are familiar to our Indigenous cultures - to us, unions mean looking out for each other and taking care of one another.** This means remembering that communities are our families, friends, and neighbors and that we are strongest when we work together. Increasing access to unions will mean that workers are able to take care of one another and ensure that their job environments are safe, high-quality and dependable with access to skills training and advancement opportunities.

This also means taking care of our lands, waters, and animal relatives, as we know these are our most sacred relationships—while also supporting our families. Just Transition reminds us that economy means management of home! We had a healthy economy before fossil fuels and resource extraction. As Indigenous peoples, we understand wealth differently—wealth is our languages being spoken, wealth is our freezers full of good subsistence foods! We as Native peoples cannot achieve wealth if it's at the expense of our lands and waters. We don't have to be coerced into taking jobs that destroy everything it means to be Indigenous.

Many of our relatives here at home no longer can see a healthy, vibrant Alaskan economy without oil, gas, and mining. Unfortunately, many jobs in these industries are low-wage, and often go to folks shipped up from Outside. It is absolutely true that we need good quality jobs to support families, invest in our communities, and carry our state, and the threat of losing jobs in extractive industries is terrifying to those that rely on them. However, this decline is coming: many of these industries are built on non-renewable resources that are not infinite, and furthermore poison the health of our rivers, our plains, our food sources, and our communities. In a matter of years, we will not have any of the profit, but will still have all of the environmental and community damage.

 Workers install panels as part of a solar array constructed for the Kotzebue Electric Association in Alaska. (Matt Bergan / KEA)



With policy like the THRIVE Agenda, our communities will maintain choice and autonomy to secure our collective futures with long-term, dependable, sustainable jobs, instead of being forced into occupations that cause harm to our people and land.

### In Alaska, this could look like many things:

**Example:** Creating sustainable local foods systems through new industries and business models to support quality jobs and benefits to workers while investing in sustainability, like kelp and regenerative (ocean) farming, that bring community wellness and follow the protocol and wisdom of our Indigenous Southeast subsistence gatherers who have always lived from and with the ocean's harvest. Kelp and seaweeds grow quickly and additionally sequester more carbon, slowing the rate of the climate crisis. Dune Lankard's Kelp Farming initiative with his Eyak community will provide an alternative for the herring trade that has been largely depleted in the Copper River Delta. This could be "one of the first real green jobs that makes sense for the Natives" and other fishermen, Lankard says. Learn more at Spruce Root COmmunity Development and Green Wave!

**Example:** Unionizing all solar installer companies in Alaska, so that our renewable and clean energy companies are founded in just and equitable ways, with healthy work for Alaskans. Job availability for renewable resources is how we heal our earth while putting food on our table. This must also include Alaska Native leadership for renewables projects in our rural communities, like Alaska Native Renewable Industries (ANRI), who will be getting Kotzebue to at least 50% renewable energy, through up to 20 hires—the majority of whom will be locals from within Kotzebue and the Northwest Arctic region. Shungnak is next!

Other great unions and unionizing projects in Alaska are the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW) Apprenticeship program is a great example of this community investment, and the Alaska Workers Association is a group for the workers who legally cannot unionize. The Fairbanks Women Carpenters Union, and UNITE HERE to protect worker health and safety, Alaska Nurses Association that works on contract negotiations, firefighters (IAFF and AK Professional Firefighters) who address toxic exposures, and many more!





## Building the power of workers to fight inequality.

**Eagle** - Ch'izhin (*Gwitch'in*), Dałika (*Dena'ina*), Telele (*Denaakk'e*), Ch'áak' (*Tlingit*), Tixłax̄ (*Unangan, Qagaadam Tunuu*), Kuumagiaq (*Yup'ik*) • Eagles are our leaders. They remind us of strength, justice, and sacredness. Eagles soar above and see clearly and carry blessings. The power and confidence of their strong wings have no doubt in their movement and their path, and when they fall, they fall together.

**We know how to build power in our communities,** and we know what we are strongest when we stand together. In Alaska, whether it's through harsh, cold winters, or busy, hardworking summers, we are family at our core - we stick up for each other and we ensure responsible leadership that comes from the people. No employment should ask us to sacrifice our safety and security. The THRIVE Agenda defends our rights as workers to be treated with dignity, with equal rights, and with racial and gender justice. No one should face any form of discrimination in work relationships--or any for that matter.

**This is a two-fold vision:** for one, it's welcoming new people into the fold. And on the other, it's the internal strengthening and re-education of unions who have historically had racist practices--that way, we all become stronger. And it's workers holding the government accountable to making sure that democracy is working for the workers--not for the CEOs.

From Aqavzik Rexford, Just Transition Fellow for the JTC "The vision of Pillar 2 feels like empowering workers and communities on the frontlines of the climate crisis and extractive economies to learn about systemic structures and the political landscape of Alaska. We see this pillar inspiring workers, especially our relatives on the North Slope, to take back their power and labor from extractive industries, empowering communities to rise to action and define what economy means to them by coming together."



### In Alaska, this could look like many things:

**Example:** Introducing equitable family leave and child care policies so that parents and grandparents have the support to take care of their families without worrying about losing their jobs. All parents should have access to generous parental leave so that we can be present for our young ones.

**Example:** Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) serves union and non-union workers that have suffered harmful toxic exposures on the job and adverse health effects. Occupational health and safety provisions must include protections from physical injuries, but also the toxic exposure injuries that often are not visible and may manifest years after exposure(s) happen, including neurological impairment, endocrine effects, cancers, and multi-generational effects including birth defects in the children and grandchildren of workers.

Executive Director Pam Miller of ACAT shares: "Solidarity forever! I think of our work with the Unite HERE Local 878 to support the Hilton and Sheraton Hotel boycotts and ultimately to enact a right-to-know ordinance that protects workers and visitors from toxic mold in public places. We have often worked with workers and veterans on issues of toxic exposures where they may disagree with us on some political issues, however on matters of worker health and safety, we work together for health and justice."

**Example:** Workers who ARE in unions have to have access to good information--often, union workers are financially exploited. We need to make sure we're supporting workers by advocating for good anti-corporate policies that actively prevent union-busting. Corporations like Uber that focus on making everyone a contractor, rather than an employee, are ways to further disempower and limit the power of collective bargaining. We've seen this happen on the North Slope as most workers there are now contractors, rather than employees.





## Investing in Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities.

**Whale** - *Yáay* (Tlingit), *Alamāx* (Unangan, Qagaadam Tunuu) • The health of our whales is the health of our planet, we revere them for their ability to support our Indigenous communities. They have long lives and long memories, tracing the same migration patterns through our Arctic waters. Their songs resonate for miles.


It's crucial that the most affected communities have the power to democratically plan, implement, and administer recovery projects. This means following BIPOC leadership. Our Alaska Native cultural values & knowledge systems lead the way forward by reminding us of our beautiful past- they are our greatest strength. This also means we must ensure that BIPOC communities are directly invested in. The THRIVE Agenda promises to invest at least 40% of funding directly to frontline and vulnerable communities.

We know that Native communities and communities of color are facing the multiple crisis of the COVID-19 pandemic, racism, and climate change. Our Alaska Native communities in particular face environmental injustice as we are experiencing the loss of our watersheds and animal habitat, increasingly dramatic landscape changes from erosion and melting permafrost, seasonal harvest changes because of warming temperatures, and direct health impacts from proximity to development projects that leach chemicals and toxins into our bodies.

**Example:** Tanana Chiefs Conference and Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium work extremely hard to provide support, resources, and workshops to Tribal leadership for Climate Resilience planning, Hazard Mitigation strategies, Community Planning the incorporates Climate adaption, and more. They work in partnership with our IGAP coordinators and Tribal administrators to expand the ways we prepare for change (rooted in our Indigenous knowledge and traditional systems).

**Example:** We know we need investment now more than ever to finally seek justice for our Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two-Spirit relatives. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention has reported murder is the third-leading cause of death among American



**Nalukataq** (*naluk-* 'to throw it underhand; to toss it up' + *kataq*) is the spring whaling festival of the Iñupiat 

Indian and Alaska Native women and the rates of violence on reservations and rural areas can be up to ten times higher than the national average. Indigenous women are three times more likely to be murdered or missing than any other demographic. The first Alaska-specific MMIWG report released this year documented 229 cases of MMIWG in Alaska; 149 as missing and 80 as murdered. This study and statistics are lower than reality because they only count the cases that are reported, instead of all instances of stolen sisters. Even fewer statistics are available to mark the theft of our trans and two-spirit relatives from our communities. Investment in this work on a scale like the THRIVE Agenda would bring us closer to protecting our daughters and sisters, reaching justice and finding peace.

**Example:** When the washeteria in Tuluksak burnt down this past winter, the Yup'ik community was left for almost a month with no access to drinkable water. Melony Allain, the village's tribal administrator, said she was fearful that some residents would resort to collecting water from the Tuluksak River, which is not safe to drink and has previously made residents sick. "I'm really, really, really hoping nobody else drinks the water, because some might not even have a choice," she shared. After two weeks of no drinking water, and extremely limited bottled water supplies fighting to reach the village, the Tuluksak Tribal Council passed an emergency declaration: the first step in a list of technicalities required before the village can start to receive financial assistance. No community should be left so long without access to drinking water. No community should be hindered by technicalities and bureaucracy to receive help they desperately need. Investments in our communities could mean cheaper, more innovative, community led and culturally informed solutions for our rural villages.

Other incredible Native community management solutions include Chickaloon Tribe's initiative to restore local salmon habitat, Igiugig's success reaching 100% renewable energy on their own salmon-friendly river-powered Ocean Renewable Power Company (ORPC) which has now moved the community completely off diesel, and Kodiak Island, which since 2014, has gotten more than 99 percent of its electricity from renewable energy, using a combination of wind and hydro.





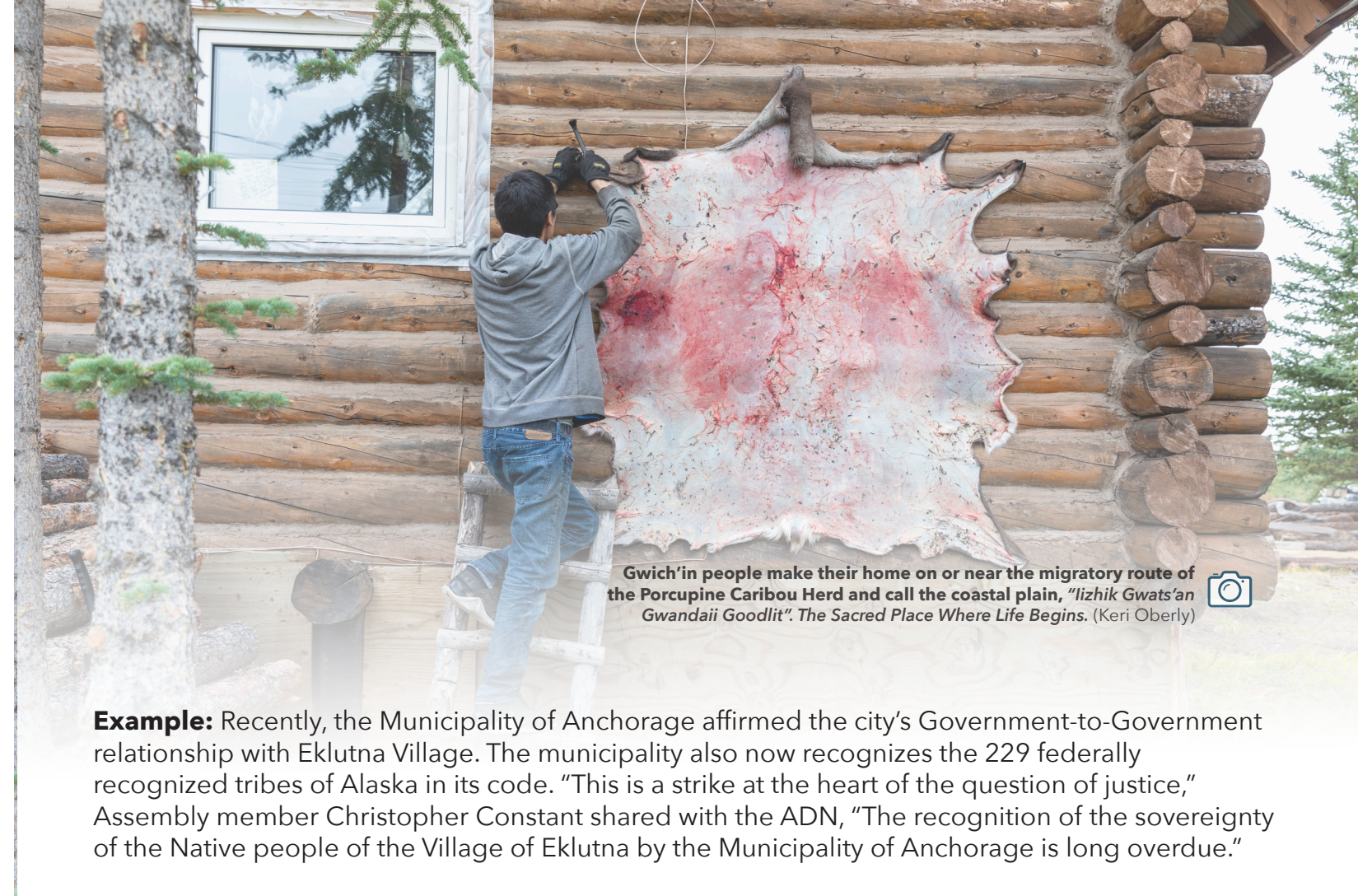
## Strengthening and healing the nation-to-nation relationship with sovereign Native Nations.

**Caribou** - Vejex (*Dena'ina*), Vadzaih (*Gwitch'in*), Bedzeyh (*Denaakk'e*), Watsix (*Tlingit*), Itxayax (*Unangan, Qagaadam Tunuu*) • The Gwitch'in Nation says that they share the same heart as the vadzaih. They have structure in their community, they travel in herds, and they play an important role to the survival of the land and other species. When they are birthing and tending to their young, they make the best informed decisions, and work to find the safest and cleanest environments for them.

Tribes must assert authority over decisions affecting lands, waters, community health, education, and protection the health and well being of tribal members, as we have for time immemorial. Before colonization and occupation by settlers, our peoples governed these lands with justice, reciprocity, and deep love. These lands were conquered by ideologies that do not understand our traditional wisdoms and cultures, nor do they understand the ways our traditions will lead us to an Indigenous future. But even through genocide and disease, coercion and assimilation, broken Treaties and loss of our homelands, we are still here and we are still strong.

**What we need now is healing- for our communities, our nations, and our earth. The THRIVE Agenda invests in the leadership and sovereign powers of our Tribal peoples.** "This looks like healing by addressing the country's oldest wound and taking the first steps to be the nation that the US claims to be. it would allow us to move forward together, at a government level, where communities and movement spaces have been moving from. It is sharing lessons of what this looks like in practice - like tender moments gathered on the banks of Grandpa Howard Luke's Gaalee'ya Spirit Camp." - *Jessica Girard, Fairbanks Climate Action Coalition*

**Concepts such as Free, Prior, Informed Consent (FPIC) with Indigenous nations are critical because we know in our hearts, cultures, and genealogies that we are the land. Nothing that is bad for the land is good for us.** "So often, decisions about extractive industries, military sites and operations are made without the consent of the tribes, resulting in harm to lands and waters. Tribes are not "party" to the records of decisions about clean up of military sites, thus resulting in long-term harm." - *Pam Miller, Alaska Community Action on Toxics*



Gwitch'in people make their home on or near the migratory route of the Porcupine Caribou Herd and call the coastal plain, "Iizhik Gwats'an Gwandaii Goodlit". *The Sacred Place Where Life Begins.* (Keri Oberly)

**Example:** Recently, the Municipality of Anchorage affirmed the city's Government-to-Government relationship with Eklutna Village. The municipality also now recognizes the 229 federally recognized tribes of Alaska in its code. "This is a strike at the heart of the question of justice," Assembly member Christopher Constant shared with the ADN, "The recognition of the sovereignty of the Native people of the Village of Eklutna by the Municipality of Anchorage is long overdue."

**Example:** In 2018, former Governor Walker made a Declaration of Emergency for Alaska Native Languages. The order directs the state education commissioner to work with partners to promote indigenous languages in public education, and also directs the state to use traditional Alaska Native place names on public signs. The order instructs state commissioners to designate a tribal liaison tasked with producing a plan to boost collaboration with Alaska Native partners.

**Example:** Joel Isaak (*Dena'ina*) has been a fierce advocate for Educational Tribal Compacting. Compacting is a process through which the State of Alaska and an Alaskan Native Tribal entity reach an agreement that formally recognizes a Tribal entity's authority to operate and oversee K-12 schools. These State Tribal Education Compact Schools (STECs) would be public schools open to all students and would offer a unique, culturally rich combination of Western and millennia-old tribal educational models.

**Example:** Southeast-Ray Paddock and Ken Weitzel, as leaders of the Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida's Climate Adaptation Plan, bring together Tribal sovereignty to meet climate and conservation work. The Adaptation Plan says that Alaska's coastal waters are more susceptible to ocean acidification because cold water can absorb more CO2 than warmer waters. The plan also says that shellfish habitats are changing because of warming waters. This is an example of a Native nation stepping up for the health of the entire region: "It is a tribal issue," Paddock told the Juneau Empire in 2019. "But in Southeast Alaska people live off the land here too, it goes beyond just being a tribal citizen issue. This is a whole regional effort, it's a bigger picture than just the tribe."



**Free, Prior & Informed Consent (FPIC)** is the inherent right Indigenous communities have to decide “yes” or “no” to mining, forestry, oil, gas, water, or other proposed external activities that would affect their lands, territories, and natural resources.



// Imagine that one day you wake up and find out that a pipeline company wants to run a thirty-inch pipe pumping 640,000 barrels of oil per day under high pressure through your burial grounds, sacred sites, medicinal plant harvesting areas, and no more than a mile from your biggest wild rice harvesting areas. And, they didn't even bother to mention it,"

- Winona LaDuke, from "To Be a Water Protector."

// We don't own the land but we belong to the land, and what happens to the land happens to us,"  
**Nathan Elswick**, Anvik Tribe's Second Chief

**Free** means consent must always be obtained without force, coercion, intimidation, manipulation, or pressure from government or industry. No violence, physical intimidation, or financial or social coercion can be used to force decisions in favour of development.

**Prior** means sufficient time is provided well in advance of any development activity so Indigenous communities can adequately review and consider all relevant information to balance the potential risks and benefits to their communities and territories of all proposed decisions and activities.

**Informed** means communities must have access to the best scientific, environmental, social, and financial information necessary to determine the risks and benefits of any decision. Communities must also be provided with adequate time to access and consult traditional knowledge holders about the proposed development activities to ensure full understanding of the long-term impact of proposed activities.

**Consent** means the right to say "yes" or "no". Consent can be given only by the legitimate chosen authority of Indigenous communities. The highest standard of consent will involve ongoing consultation with confirmation of FPIC being sought before every significant stage of project development.

// We are being contaminated without our consent and our ability to pass down our traditions and cultures, which have been carried on for thousands of generations from our ancestors to ensure the survival of our people, are being threatened. I am a Yupik grandmother, my grandchildren and our future generations have a right to clean air, clean water and toxic free food. They have a right to live our way of life as our creator intended. Because of environmental violence, it is not a matter of if we'll get cancer but when."



**Vi Waghiyi**, Sivuqaq Yupik Grandmother,  
*Native Village of Savoonga Tribal Citizen and cancer survivor*





## Combating environmental injustice and ensuring healthy lives for all.

**King Salmon** - łuk choo (*Gwitchin*), Ggaat (*Denaakk'e*), T'á (*Tlingit*), Qungaayux̄ (*Unangan, Qagaadam Tunuu*), Taryaqvak (*Yup'ik*) • Bristol Bay and the Dena'ina say that Salmon are our blood. Our health, like the salmon, is dependent on the health of the water. They are the primary traditional food for many peoples, they travel far and connect communities and water so their health echoes through the health of the entire watershed. They face adversity and persevere to get to the waters that they came from, the place they were born.

**Everyone deserves clean water.** Everyone deserves clean air. Everyone deserves clean land. Access to traditional foods and the preservation of our cultural practices are our rights too - including the right to live in right relationship to the land with hunting and harvesting.

Alaska Native communities are the least responsible for greenhouse gas and other toxic emissions to the air, water, and lands, yet are at the brunt of the climate crisis - facing unparalleled environmental racism in different forms, including: higher rates of health disparities due to direct exposure to toxic chemicals in the environment and traditional foods.



## T'eeyagga Hūt'aan Kkaa Nin' Dohodeetunh

*Native People hold the land with words*

*Koyukon translation by Eliza Jones*



United Tribes of Bristol Bay  
@UnitedTribes\_BB 

**This must also include improving access to adequate healthcare services for Rural Alaska** -including prevention of harm, proper diagnoses and treatment of illnesses associated with exposures to contaminants. That includes more mental health and spiritual health resources for our people who are struggling.

Elder Mary Crowe reflected on this pillar and shared with us "Our communities used to have people that you go to for help...We didn't have curses, we never knew ugly, we never said goodbye. So when we talk about mental health in Indian Country, we get what's going on now in our poor communities. We should ask 'Are you happy, do you know who you are, can you stand in your being?' A lot of people have had to lose that. That's why people drink, that's why people put needles in their arms, that's why people put stuff up their nose. We need our community back, we need our people trained in our ways."

**Example:** Alaska Community Action on Toxics (ACAT) works with a number of communities in Alaska, those in proximity to military and/or industrial operations, that describe a "cancer crisis," facing cancers and health disparities never seen. Studies show that traditional foods are contaminated with high levels of chemicals such as PCBs, pesticides, and mercury from military and industrial sites in Alaska and distant sources. ACAT works in partnership with tribal and other community leaders to enact policies at the local to international levels that are protective of health.





## Averting climate and environmental catastrophe.

**Arctic Tern** - Ch'ink'nul'ay (Dena'ina), chaalgeze (Denaakk'e), Kichyát (Tlingit), Qitiqdaḡ (Unangan, Qagaadam Tunuu) • Arctic Terns are the farthest migrators of any animal, with the biggest picture and widest perspective. They spread the nutrients, stories and memories from the Arctic all across the world. They are determined when they know what they want. They are swift and agile as they avert disaster in their long journey—we need to be as quick and agile as the arctic terns in combatting the climate crises.

Climate emergencies are just illuminating what is already out of balance, they are just exacerbating vulnerabilities that already exist in our structures. We do not blame the earth, we know it is our societies' dominant extractive practices that have done so.

Alaska knows the impacts of climate change—in fact, it is happening here at at least 4 times the rate as the rest of the globe due to Arctic Amplification. We are experiencing the climate crisis as our communities are facing melting permafrost, erosion of coastal and river banks, changing seasons, increased wildfires, and melting sea ice causing increasingly intense winter storms. Some communities have even been forced to relocate.

**Our air, waters, lands, traditional foods, and bodies are contaminated without our consent with harmful chemicals.** Exposures to these chemicals are associated with immune system impairment, harm to neurodevelopment in children, endocrine disruption, cancers, metabolic and reproductive disorders, with multi-generational effects as these chemicals are transferred from mother to child prenatally and through breast milk. Climate warming is exacerbating the mobilization and transport of persistent and toxic chemicals within and into the Arctic. Accelerated melting of sea ice, permafrost, and glaciers is mobilizing sequestered contaminants (including industrial chemicals and mercury) and microplastics, threatening the health of our oceans, fish, wildlife, and peoples of the North.



### This could look like so many things in our home:

**Example:** Agricultural work will be in accordance with balanced farming practices to ensure soil resilience and farm workers will be subsidised for local markets and land will be leased from tribal land holders

**Example:** Provide equitable resources to Alaska and other primarily extractive states to expedite the transition from a fossil fuel economy ensuring extractive states have the ability to justly transition away from fossil fuels.

**Example:** The Cold Climate Housing Research Center (CCHRC) is working on more than 50 projects throughout the state, including sustainable design, building science research, policy analysis, and consulting with homeowners and contractors. In this way, they are promoting and advancing the development of healthy, durable, and sustainable shelter for Alaskans and other circumpolar people.



**Qerngughullutaq  
iknaqataghaghtukut**  
*We are stronger together*

*Siberian Yupik translation by Vi Pangunnaaq Waghiyi*





## Ensuring fairness for workers and communities affected by economic transitions.

**Beaver** - Chu (Dena'ina), Tsee (Gwitch'in), Noye'e (Denaakk'e) • They know how to change their environment in their best interest, in a sustainable way, it takes daily attention and determination. They're not afraid of rushing water because they are confident in what they've built, they're agents of change and transition by using their local resources in a way that is not harmful, they are engineers and they're not afraid to build new things and know when to move on.

The Alaska Just Transition Collective, our partners & affiliates, and supporters know that any meaningful economic shifts to bring us into right relationship with the Earth must be made with the input of frontline communities and workers so that the transition is truly just and equitable.

**We must invest in jobs for communities that have most been impacted by resource extraction**--making sure that dismantlement, removal, and restoration (DR&R) opportunities are focused on employing people in communities that have been most affected. This includes trade schools, vocational training, education and employment programs and more that will ensure safe, quality, and sustainable jobs for all Alaskan workers.

**This additionally means getting candidates in elected offices who are looking forward!**

This includes strengthening Tribal leadership and tribal councils to lead the way for our tribal communities and ensure that our voting rights are protected, and no one gets left behind in this coming transition.



Camp Here: Occupy to Overcome was an Interim solution to homelessness and the affordable housing shortage in Anchorage, June 2019. (Poor Peoples Campaign of Alaska) @PPCAIaska

**Example:** Mutual Aid networks are another important example of local initiatives to provide food and care for people during the pandemic. These networks are creating a larger safety net and stronger relationships across our communities that will serve this transition time. Recent programs of unions such as Unite HERE are working to sustain healthcare for workers who have lost jobs.

**Example:** "Rather than the current model of financial and labor extraction for communities, systems should be working to make communities more whole--to support each other and find investment where it's needed the most. The work we do around debt collection is transformative: what does a health financial community look like? What do different models of credit scores look like? To me, an equitable economic transition looks like communities grounded in care, with employers incentivized towards care rather than profit." - Veri di Suvero, *Alaska Public Research Interest Group (AKPIRG)*

**Example:** Alaska has over 700 formerly and currently used defense sites, most located in close proximity to Alaska Native communities and releasing harmful chemicals into freshwater and coastal environments, with mobilization enhanced by climate warming. We need to have commitments for responsible and rapid cleanup of military and industrial sites as measures to protect food security and public health. We must train and provide jobs to local community members, and invest in innovation of remediation technologies that break down and eliminate contaminants rather than the old approach of "dig, dump, or burn."





## Reinvesting in public institutions that enable workers and communities to thrive.

**Wolf** - Zhoh (Gwitch'in), Teekkone (Denaakk'e), Tiqin (Dena'ina), Gooch (Tlingit), Aliiǰiǰ (Unangan, Qagaadam Tunuu), Kegluneq (Yup'ik) • Wolves are an indication of a healthy landscape, and their presence maintains balance. They are guardians and watchers, moving in the background. They are reliant on their community and structure, and are deeply invested in their cubs, so that they grow to be strong, independent, and fierce. Wolves have extremely heightened senses that allow them to respond, be aware, and adaptive and reflective.

**Reparations must mean more than restitution for past harm.** True reparations means repairing our relations. We must not only make amends for past harm, but reorganize the very nature of our economy so as to create new relationships going forward. Reparation demands a total reorganization of the economy. The measure of the success of reorganization is the well-being of those upon whose lands, bodies and legacies the Extractive Economy was built. And to achieve that, our movements must center the vision and leadership of those communities.

**Such public institution investment could include** increased broadband coverage, Mobile Banking and Financial Planning from Democratic Banking Alternatives, Alaska State recognition of Alaska Native nations, Education system reform, increased Tribally-run language immersion schools, Community Housing Builds through "Sweat equity" that would include training and teaching how to build your own homes, and public investments in art, music, culture and literature!



**Át Khuwaháa haa yoo xh'atángi wutusaneixhí.**

*The moment has come for us to save our language*

*Joe Hotch, Gooxh Daakashú*



Language class in Bethel, Alaska  
(Brian Adams; Courtesy of Alaska Children's Trust) 

**Example:** Anchorage Community Land Trust has worked for the past 15 years to invest in Anchorage's low-income neighborhoods, through their toolkit of real estate, community organizing, neighborhood improvements, and targeted programs. To date, 17 new small businesses have opened in Anchorage's home communities due to ACLT's work.

**Example:** the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium is one of the most successful examples of meaningful change and direct support through powerful public institutions. In June 1998, a new era of statewide management of tribal health services began when the Alaska Area Native Health Service signed a contract transferring statewide services to the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). In partnership with the more than 180,000 Alaska Native and American Indian people that we serve and the Tribal health organizations of the Alaska Tribal Health System, ANTHC provides world-class health services, which include comprehensive medical services at the Alaska Native Medical Center, wellness programs, disease research and prevention, rural provider training and rural water and sanitation systems construction. The Consortium is the largest, most comprehensive Tribal health organization in the United States, and Alaska's second-largest health employer with more than 3,000 employees offering an array of health services to people around the nation's largest state.





**Mahsi' choo, Quyana, Chin'an, Gunalchéesh, Taikuu, Háw'aa, Toyackshin,  
Qagaliqux, Tsin'aen, Quyanaa, Enaa Baasee', Thank you!**

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