

Alaska Native Village Municipal Lands Restoration Act of 2025

RESTORING LANDS FOR NATIVE
COMMUNITIES

Fixing an ANCSA Loophole

ANCSA Section 14(c)(3)

ANCSA provided land and economic opportunities to Village Corporations while preserving opportunity for municipal governance over core village lands. Required lands to be conveyed to State to be held in trust for a future municipality.

State Municipal Land Trust

The MLT system has persisted longer than intended, with no sunset or provision in ANCSA for returning lands to Village Corporations, restricting village land under state control without adequate local development paths.

Congressman Begich and Senator Murkowski Pass ANCSA Fix

ANCSA amendment restores land to village corporations and ends the trust system - supporting self-determination and economic growth.



The Problem Under ANCSA 14(c)(3)

OVER 50 YEARS OF STATE TRUST MANAGEMENT WITH A
FIDUCIARY DUTY TO FUTURE MUNICIPALITIES THAT WILL NEVER
BE FORMED AND NO SUNSET IN THE LAW

Perpetual Municipal Land Trust

ANCSA Land Trust Requirement

ANCSA required village corporations to transfer land to the state for future municipal formation, assuming most villages would form municipalities.

Limited Municipal Formation

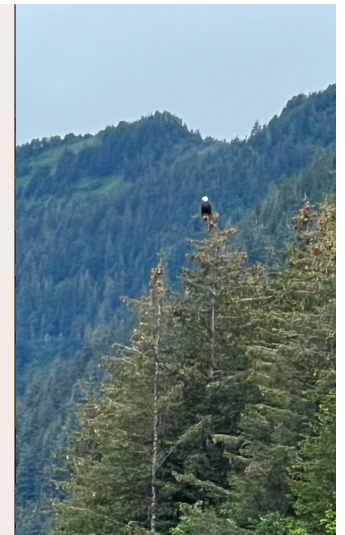
Only eight municipalities have formed since the law's passage, leaving most village lands under state trust management indefinitely.

Challenges of Perpetual Trusts

Permanent state trust management makes it difficult for villages to use lands for housing, infrastructure, and economic development needs. Nothing can compromise the potential use by a future municipality.

ANCSA Amendment

ANCSA amendment resolves the legislative flaw by addressing the perpetual municipal land trust management issue – putting an end to the program.



Why the ANCSA 14(c)(3) Fix Matters

Impacts on Village Self-Determination

•State-Controlled Land Use

- The municipal land trust system places land-use control with the State, limiting Alaska Native village self-determination.

•Restrictions on Development

- State fiduciary responsibilities restrict villages from freely developing housing, workforce, and commercial projects.

•Administrative Challenges

- State disclaimers and administrative requirements increase costs and delay routine land use by Native villages.

•Enabling Important Village Projects

- Restoring lands to village corporations enables them to work with local governance, planning, and sustainable economic growth.



Scope of the Problem

Less than half of villages complied and transferred land. Those that didn't have a cloud on title making land use difficult.

Communities Affected Statewide

•Scope of Land Trust System

- 83 Alaska Native villages conveyed over 11,500 acres into the MLT across the state.

•Compliance and Land Title Issues

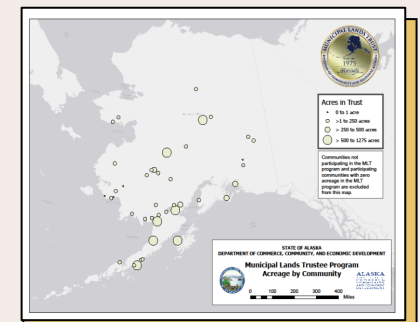
- Early federal efforts led to mixed compliance, causing unresolved land title issues impacting current land use.

•Ongoing Legal Uncertainty

- ANCSA requirements continue to create legal uncertainty even for villages that never transferred land.

•Systemic Statewide Impact

- This issue affects dozens of communities and thousands of Alaska Native shareholders statewide.



Communities Affected Statewide

101 communities completed agreements with the MLT program:

8 communities incorporated into a municipality since ANCSA passage.

6 communities have approved zero-acre settlement agreements as a “vacant village”.

1 re-conveyed lands granted to a borough.

3 had lands conveyed out of trust.

83 communities with approximately 11,500 acres currently held in trust.

<u>Village</u>	<u>Year of Incorporation</u>
Akutan	1979
Atkasuk	1982
Chignik	1983
St. George	1983
Atka	1988
False Pass	1990
Pilot Point	1992
Egegik	1995

Case Study: Chenega Village

Chenega IRA Council and Chenega Corporation requested reconveyance off all village lands for community development in 2018.

The request was rejected by MLT because it would deprive a future city of a land base.

This began the quest for a legislative fix to a problem affecting villages across the state.

Local Impacts of the MLT Program

•Land Held in Municipal Land Trust

- Chenega Village has 385 acres held within the MLT, including its core area.

•Challenges of Current Land Leasing

- Leasing land for public facilities is cumbersome, involves fees, and lacks flexibility for evolving community needs.

•Impact on Housing and Economy

- Restricts expanding workforce housing and pursuing economic opportunities vital for community strength.

•Proposed Land Control Restoration

- ANCSA fix requires return control of settlement lands to Chenega, enhancing long term community resilience.



Lands Restoration Act ANCSA Fix

Return lands to Village Corporations

Eliminate future responsibility to convey lands into the State MLT

Provisions of the Lands Restoration Act

•Full Land Conveyance Reversion

- Fully conveyed lands revert to the village corporation if no municipality was formed, clarifying ownership outcomes.

•Village Residents Must Concur by Resolution

- Village residents represented by a tribal council or other municipal organization must approve land transfer by resolution.

•Termination of ANCSA Trusts

- All trusts created under ANCSA 14(c)(3) are terminated, simplifying municipal land trust structures.

•Protection of Existing Rights

- Existing valid rights like leases and easements are preserved, with corporations assuming related obligations.



Appropriate Village Entity

- In most villages there is a village organization that represents local residents in decisions about trust lands. This may be a village tribal council, a community association, or some other group established in the community.
- The recognized group is called the "**appropriate village entity**" (**AVE**) under state regulations. The role of the AVE is to speak for village residents.
- The AVE is a partner with the MLT Program in identifying land for conveyance under ANCSA 14(c)(3). In communities that do not have an AVE, land uses are voted on by local residents in a village meeting conducted by MLT staff.
- Of the 83 communities still subject to the MLT program, 58 have an AVE identified by the State.
- In the past MLT land has only been made available for community use with the approval of the AVE.
- The Lands Restoration Act requires concurrence by village residents in the return of MLT lands. This should be by resolution from the AVE, or where no AVE has been identified by a village meeting conducted by MLT staff.**

Restoring the Promise of ANCSA

•Resolves Legislative Loose End

- The Lands Restoration Act ends the unintended perpetuation of the MLT, addressing a longstanding legislative gap in ANCSA.

•Restoring Land Ownership

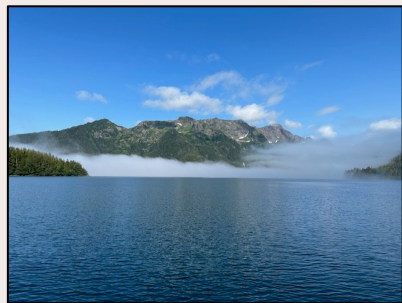
- Restores lands to village corporations, promoting local control and eliminating outdated requirements.

•Empowering Native Communities

- Supports self-determination, economic opportunity, and community control over Native lands.

•Broad Support and Advocacy

- Alaska Legislature passed unanimous resolution in support and Governor lobbied Congress for passage.



Chenega Village Cemetery is under control of the Alaska Municipal Land Trust