

[Rollcall Vote No. 38 Ex.]

YEAS—62

Baldwin	Heinrich	Portman
Bennet	Hickenlooper	Reed
Blumenthal	Hirono	Romney
Blunt	Kaine	Rosen
Booker	Kelly	Sanders
Brown	King	Schatz
Burr	Klobuchar	Schumer
Cantwell	Lankford	Shaheen
Capito	Leahy	Sinema
Cardin	Lee	Smith
Carper	Lummis	Stabenow
Casey	Manchin	Tester
Collins	Markey	Tillis
Coons	Menendez	Toomey
Cortez Masto	Merkley	Van Hollen
Duckworth	Murkowski	Warner
Durbin	Murphy	Warnock
Gillibrand	Murray	Warren
Graham	Ossoff	Whitehouse
Hassan	Padilla	Wyden
Hawley	Peters	

NAYS—34

Blackburn	Grassley	Rubio
Boozman	Hagerty	Sasse
Braun	Hoeven	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Hyde-Smith	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Inhofe	Shelby
Cotton	Johnson	Sullivan
Cramer	Kennedy	Thune
Crapo	Marshall	Tuberville
Cruz	McConnell	Wicker
Daines	Moran	Young
Ernst	Paul	
Fischer	Risch	

NOT VOTING—4

Barrasso	Luján
Feinstein	Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Ms. SINEMA). Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Loren L. AliKhan, of the District of Columbia, to be an Associate Judge of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals for a term of fifteen years.

VOTE ON ALIKHAN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the AliKhan nomination?

Mr. HEINRICH. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 55, nays 41, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 39 Ex.]

YEAS—55

Baldwin	Hickenlooper	Romney
Bennet	Hirono	Rosen
Blumenthal	Kaine	Sanders
Blunt	Kelly	Schatz
Booker	King	Schumer
Brown	Klobuchar	Shaheen
Cantwell	Leahy	Sinema
Cardin	Manchin	Smith
Carper	Markey	Stabenow
Casey	Menendez	Tester
Collins	Merkley	Tillis
Coons	Murkowski	Van Hollen
Cortez Masto	Murphy	Warner
Duckworth	Murray	Warnock
Durbin	Ossoff	Warren
Gillibrand	Padilla	Whitehouse
Graham	Peters	Wyden
Hassan	Portman	
Heinrich	Reed	

NAYS—41

Blackburn	Grassley	Paul
Boozman	Hagerty	Risch
Braun	Hawley	Rubio
Burr	Hoeven	Sasse
Capito	Hyde-Smith	Scott (FL)
Cassidy	Inhofe	Scott (SC)
Cornyn	Johnson	Shelby
Cotton	Kennedy	Sullivan
Cramer	Lankford	Thune
Crapo	Lee	Toomey
Cruz	Lummis	Tuberville
Daines	Marshall	Wicker
Ernst	McConnell	Young
Fischer	Moran	

NOT VOTING—4

Barrasso	Luján
Feinstein	Rounds

The nomination was confirmed.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the motion to reconsider is considered made and laid upon the table, and the President will be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

RECESS

Thereupon, the Senate, at 1:07 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Montana.

UNANIMOUS CONSENT REQUEST—EXECUTIVE CALENDAR NO. 650

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, I rise today to speak in support of Martha Williams to be the Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

I represent a State that goes by many names. Most of you know it as Montana, but it is often called Big Sky Country, the Last Best Place, and even the Treasure State. Montana has earned these names through an abundance of beauty and natural resources, and as a result we have fostered a robust outdoor economy that relies on responsible forest management. Folks come to Montana from all over the world to enjoy all that our State has to offer. Thousands of folks make their living by working the land and showing folks the best way to enjoy it.

But the key to preserving our multi-billion-dollar outdoor economy is proper stewardship and oversight of our natural resources. That means talking

to folks on the ground. It means bringing competing interests to the table to find the most sustainable ways to manage our public lands. Not only do our forests and rivers create thousands of good-paying jobs, but they also create countless memories for families in our country. So it is critically important that we have balanced oversight in place to guarantee that Montana's outdoor economy remains vibrant for generations to come.

The Director of Fish and Wildlife Service plays a central role in this oversight, and that is why I am proud to support Martha Williams' nomination today. As Director, she will be tasked with the management and recovery of our Nation's fish and wildlife and overseeing a large chunk of our public lands—89 million acres, to be exact, from Montana's own Red Rock Lakes National Wildlife Refuge all the way to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

As a Montanan and a former Director of the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks, Ms. Williams has demonstrated time and time again her ability to bring folks together to find lasting solutions, to collaborate to find common ground. She always leads with science and has developed State management plans for issues ranging from grizzly bears to aquatic invasive mussels, and she has done it with input from all the relevant stakeholders.

She also has a profound respect and understanding of the bedrock laws that guide responsible land and wildlife management. She will be bringing with her over a decade of legal experience with the Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks as well as a well-regarded legal scholar at the University of Montana.

She has spent her entire career standing up for our public lands and proven herself to be a thoughtful, non-partisan steward who works collaboratively with folks on the ground to make positive change. Her top-notch ability to find common ground between sportsmen and conservationists alike and her skills as an exceptional problem-solver will make her an outstanding Director at the Fish and Wildlife Service.

She has strong support from sports men and women, biologists, and academics alike and has already received strong bipartisan support from the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee. She was passed out of committee on a 16-to-4 vote.

Make no mistake about it, we will miss her leadership in the Treasure State, but I am looking forward to seeing her effective management skills at the Federal level. This position is very important for the stewardship of our land and our waters, and I would urge my colleagues to support her confirmation today.

And in that vein, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate consider the following nomination: Calendar No. 650, Martha Williams, of Montana, to be Director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service; that the nomination be

confirmed, the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

The Senator from Alaska.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Madam President, reserving the right to object, I would like to talk a little bit about not just Ms. Williams—who as my friend from Montana has mentioned—I actually think she is qualified—but the issues that are in front of the Fish and Wildlife Service, as we speak, that relate to my State, the great State of Alaska.

Unfortunately, it has been one Executive order, Executive action, delay targeting Alaska—some from the Fish and Wildlife Service that has had an enormously negative impact on my State.

I agree with the Senator from Montana. Fish and Wildlife Service is important. He mentioned that it manages 89 million acres nationwide. Well, 77 million acres of that 89 are in Alaska. Eight-five percent of Fish and Wildlife Service land that is managed is in one State, the great State of Alaska, a size bigger than the State of New Mexico, just for Fish and Wildlife Service land control.

So this Agency, this nominee will have an enormous impact on my constituents and, indeed, right now is having an enormous impact on my constituents, and I can't get them to do anything constructive for the people I represent.

Let me give you two, and perhaps my colleague from Montana can help me out with this. These are two directly—directly—in the jurisdiction of the Fish and Wildlife Service that we have been asking for support on and haven't gotten it. One is the Russian River land exchange. This is a vital exchange that needs to happen for a highway project on Alaska's Kenai Peninsula.

Here is the thing about this land exchange. It has been in the works since 1975—44 years, to be exact. We believe it is the longest running federally led environmental impact statement in the history of America, which is actually what happens a lot in the great State of Alaska. Groups come up; they don't want any resource development; they don't want any access to land and they sue and they stop and they try to delay things. This one has been delayed, in one form or another, for 44 years.

Now, the previous administration, to its credit, heard the voices of Alaska, responded to the input from different stakeholders, and actually put forward a reasonable land exchange that was approved by the Federal Government. The regional office of the Fish and Wildlife Service sent the approved package to headquarters in Washington, DC, in November, where it sits—where it sits.

So one thing I would like to do before this nominee moves forward is get a commitment to approve that. It is very simple—44 years. I don't think we are asking too much, but it is delayed.

Let me give you another one. Many of you have heard about the King Cove road. You are going to hear about it again because it is an issue that every Alaskan, even those who don't live out on the Aleutian Island chain, are passionate about. Only in Alaska could this happen. It is an 11-mile, single-lane gravel road that will save lives for people in the community of King Cove—primarily Alaska Native—and they need approval of that through another land exchange. We have been working on that for over 40 years—40 years. People in my communities in that part of the State have died because there is no road to access an airport. There are a lot of storms in that part of the world, the Aleutian Islands. When they need access to get out on a plane, they often don't have it because we can't build a single lane, 11-mile gravel road.

We have a land exchange approved by the previous administration. This administration has said they are looking to approve it too. That is great news, but the Secretary of the Interior has said she is not going to fully endorse it until she goes out to King Cove and sees it herself. OK. We have been waiting for that visit for a year—for a year.

There is a theme here. With the new administration, if there is something that has been helpful to my State, primarily by the previous administration, the Trump administration, on so many issues, bipartisan issues for Alaska, which has helped us in historic ways—on those helpful things, the new administration comes in, and they say: We are going to delay it. We are going to delay it. We have to relook at it. We don't know. If the Trump administration did it for Alaska, it must have been bad. That is their thing.

But on things that harm my State, this administration on day 1 has expedited so many things. Day 1, the President is in office for 1 hour, and he issues an order dealing with ANWR, which this body approved in 2017. If it helps Alaska, they delay it. If it hurts Alaska, they are all over it.

What we have in the first year of the Biden administration—first year—are 21 Executive orders and Executive actions negatively impacting my State across the board on every topic you can imagine: access to lands, tourism, fishing—21 Executive orders or actions.

I gave a speech on this before the holidays, and it was 20—now it is 21—solely focused on Alaska. There is no other State in the country that is getting this kind of attention from this administration. I am sure the great State of Montana isn't.

It is not just about resource development. These actions are hurting the ability of my constituents to put food on the table, lights on in their homes, jobs, cultures.

And one area that doesn't nearly get enough attention, these actions, so many of them, are actually negatively impacting the Alaska Native community of the great State of Alaska. The

Native people of my State are targeted. Let me give you one example. The previous administration, working with this body in a bipartisan way, finally passed a bill that provided justice to Alaska Native Vietnam veterans who served their country during Vietnam. The Alaska Native community is one of the most patriotic communities in the country. They serve at higher rates in the military than any other ethnic group in the country.

When many of them went to fight in Vietnam, they came home, and a law that had been on the books since 1906—the ability to get a Native allotment—had expired. They came home and said: Wait, I can't get my native allotment? So we finally fixed that almost a half century later. Of course, a lot of radical enviros hated it because it is giving land in Alaska to people.

The No. 1 issue I raised with Secretary Holland during her confirmation process was to make sure the Executive order to get these lands to Vietnam veterans—Alaska Native Vietnam veterans—stays on track. The Trump administration did all they could to make it happen. All they had to do was hit "send." She delayed it for 2 years—delayed it for 2 years. She wasn't even going to tell the delegation. I guarantee you, in the next 2 years, as this is being delayed, a lot of these Vietnam vets—Alaska Vietnam vets—will die before they even get their lands. So we are starting to hear it.

I want to make one final point. This is very important. This administration talks a lot about racial justice, environmental equity. They talk about it all the time, but it comes with a caveat. They say they want to help disadvantaged communities, minority communities. I think that is a good goal, but it comes with a caveat—racial justice, environmental equity, unless it is for the indigenous people of Alaska, and then they get targeted.

A lot of these Executive orders are targeting them. I have a whole list where some of the most disadvantaged Americans in the country are being targeted—in my view, because of their race—by this administration.

I have submitted these before, but I am going to submit them again for the RECORD, several letters from Alaska Native groups talking about this unwarranted lack of consultation and targeting of their interests in my State.

I ask unanimous consent to have one of these letters printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the material was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

VOICE OF THE ARCTIC INUPIAT,
December 10, 2021.

Re Executive Order 13985

DEAR SECRETARY HAALAND: My name is John Hopson Jr., and I am President of Voice of the Arctic Inupiat (VOICE). VOICE is a nonprofit corporation whose members include representatives from Alaska's North Slope tribal councils, municipal governments, Alaska Native Corporations, our local school district, regional health organization, and the tribal college from the North Slope

of Alaska. I am writing today to provide comments on Executive Order 13985 calling on federal agencies to advance equity by identifying and addressing barriers to equal opportunity that underserved communities face due to government policies and programs.

The North Slope region is one of the most remote areas in the United States and all eight communities in our region are considered “underserved.” We see many barriers and challenges when addressing equity in government policies and action. The focus areas identified in EO 13985 around contracting, recreating on public lands and tribal discretionary grants are part of a larger problem when addressing the issue for native communities that we see, in addition to recent decisions by this administration around resource development and the economy our region relies on.

As an organization built on inclusiveness, we emphasize the importance of addressing equity in several ways: most importantly, with continued dialogue because we still see and feel the effects of a federal government that treated our people as a burden and an impedance. Several of our communities are still dealing with the cleanup of toxic materials leftover from military occupation and the development of Distance Early Warning—“DEW line”—sites during the Cold War. One of our communities, Kaktovik, was forced to relocate three times in recent history and their homes and gravesites were bulldozed to flatten out a runway for Air Force activity without restitution or even an apology. Trust in our federal government is still being built, and the basis of that relationship is meaningful consultation, collaboration and only then can greater equity be seen for underserved communities like ours.

In terms of equity, we understand that the Biden Administration has made promises domestically and internationally to curb this country’s emissions and we, as Iñupiat people whose homelands are on the front lines of climate change, can understand the need to move in that direction when it comes to address government policies. What we cannot support, however, is that those efforts are made on the backs of indigenous peoples without even a conversation, that is not how more equity is achieved. The federal government must allow us the time and resources for a thoughtful, deliberate, and sustainable transition of our economy but instead we have seen secretarial and executive actions that threaten our way of economic sustainability and therefore our way of life.

Our most pressing concern is the imminent threat to the North Slope Borough economy that started on day one of this administration, with little warning nor communication through reversing Records of Decision, halting new projects, and a reductionist climate agenda that singles out and vilifies the oil and gas industry as an alternative to creating a realistic, multi-dimensional climate strategy. The State of Alaska has some of this highest and most rigorous environmental protection policies in the country with respect to oil and gas development. Our regional government, the North Slope Borough (NSB) is a home-rule government responsible for more territory than any other local government in the nation, an area roughly the same size as the state of Indiana. The NSB receives 96% of their revenue from property taxes that are levied on oil and gas industry infrastructure on the North Slope, which enables them to provide services that were historically inaccessible in the Arctic. The Borough School District provides vocational and academic education for people of all ages; NSB health clinics provide modern medicinal services to residents in even the smallest and remote of villages.

The Municipal Services Department operates water, sewer, and electric utilities, plows roads and runways, and maintains landfills. The Planning Department provides a third level of oversight to the oil industry within our region on top of State and federal oversight and regulations. Other NSB departments provide housing, police and fire protection, search and rescue, and other critical services to our communities. They do this independently, without assistance from state nor federal government. The benefits of modern American civilization, common in the rest of the nation, have been built on the foundation of the North Slope oil industry.

In terms of equity for our region and as economies transition, the U.S. government must work to create as much stability as possible and make every effort to not leave our residents to deal with the volatility and instability that will likely result from policy changes made in the name of decarbonization. Fossil fuel usage will no doubt decrease over time as renewable resources become more widely available and affordable. However, renewable resource technology has not developed to a place where it can be widely applicable in our region; charging an electric car is not easy in villages that experience blackouts or still rely on diesel generators for power. Instead of trying to score short term political capital by drastically changing oil and gas extraction and ignoring local perspectives, a long-term realistic outlook and working with the people in the places that currently rely on these resources is not only the right thing to do, but an obligation of the government under its trust responsibility with its indigenous peoples. Without that cooperation and relationship, equity will be impossible to achieve as indigenous and local voices will be ignored.

CONTRACTS FOR BUSINESSES WITH CHARACTERISTICS THAT ALIGN WITH THE DEFINITION OF UNDERSERVED COMMUNITY

Impacts on equity seen through the contracts and businesses awarded by federal agencies are visible in many ways. Our region has had little investment or resources put in place to develop businesses that can help build capacity to provide the ability to search for, apply and win government contracts. If a local business has an economic development arm, most are not comparable to outside larger firms who have an advantage and can adjust their business models easily to bid and be awarded government contracts. The businesses that do get contracts typically do not align with local traditions and practices or rarely have the potential to bring tangible economic return to the community beyond short-term labor positions. When and if activity does occur, some larger businesses fail engage with local tribes, and sometimes even the awarding agency fails to communicate with residents on what project or business opportunities are upcoming in their own community. The Department of the Interior (“Department”) can use power of procurement to contract with and support businesses that align and respect native communities, particularly small and disadvantaged businesses that align with local traditions.

We recommend that the Department find more creative ways to distribute information via social media and local media in addition to helping facilitate matching programs for small businesses to become teaming partners. The Department can also do better by communicating opportunities that are available to tribal businesses by facilitating additional networking through conferences, forums or meet and greets. Another way would be for the Department to implement additional policies requiring large businesses to

work with smaller businesses on contracting opportunities, like the small businesses acting as a sub-contractor to a prime contractor, allowing for partnership and mentorship between the companies of different sizes. Regional non-profits can help facilitate this partnership and have capacity that smaller tribes and communities may not.

Another way to improve the process and relationships around federal contracting would be to help provide clearer communication channels for businesses to access the Department’s point of contacts. As most interactions with the federal government, it is difficult finding answers to questions in a timely manner, creating additional issues for smaller and tribal businesses who are trying to navigate the application process.

We also see barriers surrounding the application processes themselves. No two agencies have the same procurement or application requirements. This builds additional stumbling blocks into the system and requires local businesses, often an incredibly small team of people, to do significant additional work. Streamlining federal grants and contracts to have similar requirements would greatly improve equity and the ability of small indigenous companies or entities to be successful through these processes.

RECREATION ACCESS TO DOI-MANAGED LANDS FOR UNDERSERVED COMMUNITIES

The Iñupiat people and the residents who call the Arctic home have a unique relationship with the lands and water. Historically our people regularly roamed hundreds of miles in search of game and hunted up and down our coastlines to survive. But many of our communities continue to have a strained relationship with the federal government and agencies with the Department because of historical slights and being denied access to lands that were historically used. On top of that, additional burdensome Departmental and agency regulations and policies have created additional barriers when trying to access and recreate on across our homelands that are now public lands which surround many of our communities. Two communities in our region, Anaktuvuk Pass which lies inside the Gates of the Arctic National Park and Kaktovik which lies within the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge are impacted by Department agencies that have not implemented their rights under the 1980 Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (“ANILCA”). There are several provisions under ANILCA that have either not been implemented or have been partially implemented that restricts these communities access to their subsistence resources through restrictions. Section 1110(b) was intended to protect the traditional overland travel for these communities to allow for summer access however the appropriate documentation of traditional access has not been completed for Kaktovik over 40 years after the passage of ANILCA. The regulation of motorized vehicles on public land makes it harder for native communities to access their own lands, let alone public lands in the federal land system. The agencies have not worked with either community in implementation of Section 1307 with respect to tourism in either the park or the refuge. This is the opposite of the question, in that the Department agencies are issuing permits over the homelands of our people yet not providing either Anaktuvuk Pass or Kaktovik the ability to control tourism to their economic benefit by not following Section 1307.

CLIMATE CHANGE

Climate change appears in many different forms across Alaska. It is well known that the Arctic is “ground zero” for climate change; on Alaska’s North Slope, increased

ice-free seasons have resulted in greater coastal erosion and difficulty accessing some of our subsistence resources; melting permafrost has exacerbated this erosion in addition to creating infrastructure damage that is expensive to repair, ruining our traditional *siguaqs* (ice cellars where meat is stored) through flooding, and is making travel across tundra more difficult. Elsewhere in Alaska, other regions are also struggling with an increase in wildfires, the warming of rivers that leads to stresses in the fish populations that they rely on to subsist, flooding, and the introduction and expansion of invasive plants and insects. Any response mechanisms that the government introduces must be flexible and robust enough to cover the varying changes that we are seeing across our region and the State as a whole.

VOICE's overarching recommendation is that the Department consider—in lieu of new “top down” policies that, while well intentioned, don't always serve communities as they are intended—setting up a grant program that allows affected communities the flexibility and empowerment to respond to the impacts that they are facing in a culturally responsible way that fits their local environment and community. Overall, we have not seen very many examples of government responses and assistance to our climate related changes that have been particularly useful. Any action related to a changing climate falls to the NSB, to handle the responses in our communities, including building sea walls to protect against erosion and fixing roads and buildings damaged by permafrost thaw. Through a multi-year effort, the NSB has been working through the process of receiving funding and support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to build revetment in the community of Utqiagvik, our largest community, to prevent erosion from consuming many houses, businesses, and local infrastructure. Utqiagvik is not the only community in our region that is experiencing significant erosion; there are similar needs in Point Hope and Wainwright. Programs and policies that would assist in assessment of climate related changes and address solutions and funding around these impacts are necessary.

In terms of climate change observation and other related programs, we have seen most success in local observer networks, when local people are trained to monitor and measure the changes that they are seeing in their own communities, this creates a sense of empowerment rather than helplessness. Ideally, permanent, local jobs within our communities threatened by climate change would be created by an initiative from the federal government. We believe that support of these local networks should be prioritized over the many studies in our communities that are conducted by multiple federal agencies. Current local network systems need to be expanded to include all communities because they rely heavily on indigenous and traditional knowledge of our environment in a way that no western scientist can compare. VOICE recommends that there are clear definitions developed around climate change terminology, for example, ‘climate change resilience’ is ambiguous and is geographically variable. The truth is that in the Arctic, and in Alaska in general, we are well beyond the point of mitigation and have firmly moved into the realm of adaptation. From retrofitting existing infrastructure to moving entire communities, adaptation is incredibly expensive. Federal agencies should take a stronger initiative in partnering with our local communities to better understand the impacts of climate change and the viability of available renewable technologies that can be utilized in arctic conditions. All of our communities currently run off of hydro-

carbons and we hear from those unfamiliar with our ecosystem that we should begin the switch to run our communities off of renewable resources, but we have yet to see a legitimate solution to our energy needs that is viable in the unique and challenging Arctic conditions.

APPLYING FOR AND ACCESSING TRIBAL DISCRETIONARY GRANTS

One way the process around discretionary grants for tribes that can be improved would be to set up additional offices and positions in regional offices like Tribal grant liaisons to assist tribes and help build a sustainable beneficial relationship. A regional grant liaison dedicated to tribes would also be able to help the department create more targeted communication grant campaigns and they could act as a point of contact for tribes navigating the grants process. Small tribes like those in our region often have a difficult time building relationships with the federal government and understanding the federal regulations around the grants they are applying for. As I mentioned the burdensome reporting process can create challenges with tribes that have low capacity or high turnover, leaving them ineligible for future grants. Federal agencies should take a stronger initiative in partnering with our local communities to better understand them before developing and awarding grants.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on addressing equity in government policies. We hope that this conversation will be ongoing and that our comments will be useful as the United States Government decides how best to address this issue.

Quyanaq,

JOHN HOPSON, JR.,
President.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Here is one. It is from the president of the Voice of the Arctic Inupiat, John Hopson, Jr.

In terms of equity [racial equity] we understand that the Biden Administration has made promises domestically and internationally to curb this country's emissions and we, as Inupiat people whose homelands are on the front lines of climate change, can understand the need to move in that direction when it comes to address government policies. What we cannot support, however, is that those efforts are [often] made on the backs of indigenous peoples in Alaska without even a conversation, that is not how more equity is achieved. The federal government must allow us time and resources for a thoughtful, deliberate, and sustainable transition of our economy but instead we have seen secretarial and executive actions [from this administration] that threaten our way of [life and] economic sustainability and therefore our [entire] way of life [in America's Arctic].

Another group: Apparently, consultation with all indigenous groups in the country, except for those in Alaska, is this administration's policy.

So, bottom line, I need commitments from the Fish and Wildlife Service on these issues: the Russian River land exchange, the King Cove land exchange. More broadly, I need the administration to end its war on Alaska and our working families.

I am happy to discuss with the Senator from Montana on these issues and maybe get his help, but for right now, I object.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The objection is heard.

Mr. TESTER. Madam President, could I just get a minute?

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. TESTER. Because I know there is a vote coming.

First of all, I would ask my friend from Alaska—I appreciate the fact you are standing up for your constituents to do what is right. I have no problem with that whatsoever. I have no problem with the concerns you brought up on the Russian River and the King Cove Road, although I don't know the issues nearly as well as you do. But my point is this: If you are able to put Ms. WILLIAMS in as Director of the Fish and Wildlife Service, she has a track record of listening to people. You happen to have a “U.S. Senator” in front of your name; you will be at the top of the list. She is not somebody who shuts the door and says: Just because you are Republican, I don't want to listen to you. She is somebody who always brings in people, collaborates, and comes to a decision that will work. I wouldn't be up here advocating for her if I didn't believe that.

Mr. SULLIVAN. Well, to my colleague, I look forward to working with you on that and those amendments and look forward to moving her nomination forward in that light.

I yield the floor.

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of the following nomination, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read the nomination of Amy Gutmann, of Pennsylvania, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federal Republic of Germany.

VOTE ON GUTMANN NOMINATION

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The question is, Will the Senate advise and consent to the Gutmann nomination?

Mr. DURBIN. I ask for the yeas and nays.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there a sufficient second?

There appears to be a sufficient second.

The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk called the roll.

Mr. DURBIN. I announce that the Senator from California (Mrs. FEINSTEIN) and the Senator from New Mexico (Mr. LUJÁN) are necessarily absent.

Mr. THUNE. The following Senators are necessarily absent: the Senator from Wyoming (Mr. BARRASSO) and the Senator from South Dakota (Mr. ROUNDS).

The result was announced—yeas 54, nays 42, as follows:

[Rollcall Vote No. 40 Ex.]

YEAS—54

Baldwin	Booker	Carper
Bennet	Brown	Casey
Blumenthal	Cantwell	Collins
Blunt	Cardin	Coons