



111 WEST 16TH AVENUE ▼ SUITE 400
ANCHORAGE, AK 99501
P 907.278.3602 ▼ F 907.276.3924

Testimony of
Bristol Bay Native Corporation
by
Polly Watson
on
Economic Self-Determination in Action:
Examining the Small Business Administration Native 8(a) Program
for the
United States Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

February 10, 2026

Chairman, Vice Chairman, and Members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify today. I am Polly Watson, and I am here on behalf of Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC), an Alaska Native Corporation formed under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act to serve the Alaska Native people of the Bristol Bay region. I have worked for BBNC for over eight years and currently serve as Vice President of Operations. I am also a BBNC shareholder. My family is from the community of Perryville, a village of less than 100 residents that is located on the eastern side of the Alaska Peninsula, roughly 500 miles from Anchorage, and costs \$1,600 for a round trip airline ticket to go home. I am also the proud mother of a United States Marine.

BBNC currently has more than 12,000 Alaska Native shareholders who have present day or ancestral ties to the Bristol Bay region. The mission of BBNC is “Enriching our Native Way of Life.” We deliver on this mission in a myriad of ways – paying direct financial quarterly dividends to shareholders, providing educational and vocational scholarships, assisting with workforce development and job searches, promoting cultural and language preservation programs, and being good stewards of the lands and resources in the Bristol Bay region—lands our people have relied on for subsistence for thousands of years.

BBNC is able to provide these services to its shareholders and their descendants in large part due to financial strength and successes of our operating subsidiaries. We operate a diverse portfolio of businesses, several of which participate in the SBA 8(a) Program. These companies deliver critical services to federal agencies in areas such as logistics, construction, facilities support, information technology, professional services, and mission support.

The 8(a) program functions as an outcome-driven model. Performance is directly tied to shareholder benefit and community reinvestment, while federal agencies receive reliable services delivered under the same standards and oversight as all federal contractors.

One example is our in-house mentorship program, through which we mentor village corporations in our region to become independent, successful federal contractors. Through this program, we share compliance systems, procurement knowledge, and operational support so that these entities can eventually compete on their own. This approach builds local capacity, creates additional benefits to those villages and their shareholders, and expands the pool of qualified small contractors serving the federal government.

Another example is our partnership with the State of Alaska Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to deliver mobile DMV services directly to rural villages—villages of no more than a couple hundred people that are only reachable by small plane, boat, or by snowmachine—communities without access to DMV offices. Through this program, we have worked with the DMV to bring REAL ID and driver’s license services to seven villages in the Bristol Bay region, serving 544 rural residents who would otherwise face costly and time-consuming travel to access these essential services. For many residents, particularly those who are unemployed or seeking work, obtaining a driver’s license requires a round-trip flight to Anchorage that can cost roughly \$1,000, not including lodging, meals, or time away from family. Without valid identification, individuals may be unable to apply for jobs, complete hiring paperwork, or meet employer requirements. By bringing these services directly to villages, we remove barriers to obtaining a REAL ID and obtaining a driver’s license and making it easier for residents to work, access healthcare, and travel safely, while also reducing burdens on families and the state.

At the same time, the federal government benefits directly from contracting with BBNC’s experienced and talent-driven companies. Agencies receive high-quality services delivered efficiently and at competitive cost. Sole-source authority reduces procurement timelines, lowers administrative burden, and minimizes protest risk. In mission-critical areas such as defense, infrastructure, healthcare, and professional services, speed and reliability matter.

In addition to SBAs oversight, BBNC operates through holding companies staffed with experienced industry professionals who provide strong corporate governance and strategic oversight across our subsidiary portfolio. BBNC establishes clear expectations and accountability through strong governance: our compliance program, the continuity of experienced teams, many of whom have maintained continuous employment with BBNC since our first 8(a) contract in 1995, site visits, regular reviews, reporting, and performance monitoring. This layered governance structure strengthens internal controls, enhances transparency, and reduces performance risk for government customers. We take this responsibility seriously because our shareholders and our communities depend on it.

The SBA 8(a) Program is a proven mechanism for building lasting economic capacity. It strengthens Alaska Native communities, delivers value to federal and state partners, and creates opportunity where it is most needed.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify.



MISSION

Enriching our Native way of life.

VISION

To responsibly steward the land and waters in the Bristol Bay region, celebrate the legacy of its people, and enhance the lives of BBNC shareholders.

VALUES

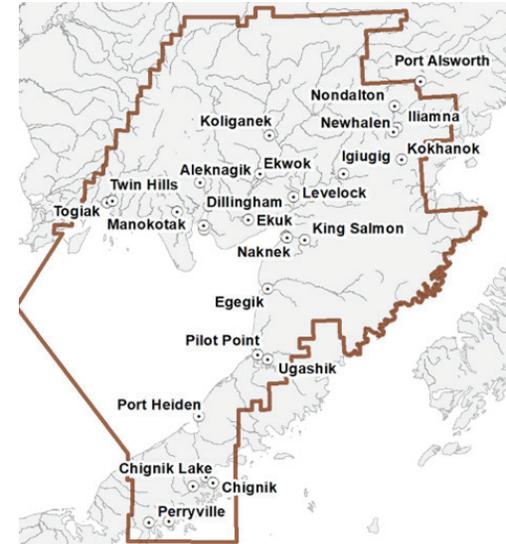
- Respect the people, land, and natural resources that are the basis for our culture and the Native way of life.
- Responsibly manage natural resources, prioritizing the cultural and economic value of the Bristol Bay fishery.
- Responsibly manage financial resources, leading to a continuous source of dividends and benefits for our shareholders.
- Maintain integrity and fairness in our dealings with all stakeholders.

BBNC GOVERNMENT CONTRACTING BENEFITS

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC), an Alaska Native Regional Corporation established under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (ANCSA) of 1971, serves Alaska Natives with ties to the Bristol Bay Region. As of March 31, 2025, BBNC had 12,262 shareholders and approximately 11,000 descendants. The 40-million-acre Bristol Bay region is renowned for its world-class salmon fishery.

BBNC participates in the SBA 8(a) Business Development Program as a key pathway to federal contracting, delivering complex, high-value solutions to government clients. This engagement drives operational growth, builds commercial expertise, and fulfills the congressional intent of integrating Alaska Native enterprises into the national economy.

More importantly, the value generated through these contracts extends far beyond the balance sheet. Profits are strategically reinvested to support shareholders and the community through education, workforce development, dividends, and celebration of cultural heritage. BBNC’s model demonstrates the powerful intersection of economic performance and social purpose, reinforcing long-term self-determination and generational impact across Alaska Native communities.



SHAREHOLDER BENEFITS AND OPPORTUNITIES

- **Financial and estate support:** shareholder/Elder distributions, memorial fund, stock transfers, estate processing
- **Education and career development:** scholarships, internships, employment support, leadership programs (Training Without Walls, Bristol Bay Leadership Forum and Youth Leadership Forum)
- **Training and skills:** industry and technical training leading to jobs with BBNC subsidiaries

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

- **Community programs and events** supported by BBNC
- **ANCSA land and assets management**, including subsistence areas
- **Shareholder engagement:** annual meeting, informational meetings, annual report and proxy materials, newsletters, website, social media

SPOTLIGHT: 2024 TRAINING HIGHLIGHTS

Over 250 shareholders, spouses, and descendants received training in areas including:

- Asbestos abatement
- EMT and first aid
- Microsoft Office
- CDL Class A and B
- Heavy equipment operation
- North Slope
- Culinary
- Hazwoper
- Telecommunications construction/carpentry
- Drivers education
- IRATA (rope access)



Enriching Our Native Way of Life



Who We Are

Bristol Bay Native Corporation (BBNC) is a diversified Alaska Native investment corporation dedicated to the mission of “Enriching Our Native Way of Life.” Established through the Alaska Native Claims Act of 1971, BBNC works to enhance the lives of our shareholders, protect the land in Bristol Bay, and celebrate the cultures and legacy of our people. We embrace the innovative and courageous spirit of our region, with the belief that through partnerships and hard work, great things are possible.

Our Commitment

As an Alaska Native Corporation, BBNC is deeply committed to Bristol Bay and its people. This focus is the lens through which we work, invest, and grow. We turn profits into shareholder benefits—more than \$400 million in dividend distributions, along with employment and educational opportunities, cultural programs, and more—strengthening local economies and communities.

Since 1996, the Bristol Bay Foundation has distributed over 5,300 scholarships, totaling over \$13.1 million in awards.

In addition, BBNC challenges our companies to provide employment, internships, and training opportunities to BBNC shareholders and descendants. During FY2025, BBNC and its companies paid more than \$15.5 million in shareholder wages.

Our Land

At 40 million acres, the Bristol Bay region is about the size of Georgia. The region has spectacular landscapes, volcanoes, unspoiled wilderness, and diverse state and national parks and refuges. In addition to roughly 7,400 human residents, Bristol Bay is home to abundant wildlife—10,000 brown bears, 25,000 walruses, and 50 million salmon, plus freshwater seals, ospreys, eagles, caribou, moose, beavers, porcupines, otters, foxes, and varied waterfowl.

The Bristol Bay villages are situated in the watershed of the renowned Bristol Bay salmon fishery, the world’s largest sockeye fishery. The pristine lakes and rivers that empty into Bristol Bay support spawning and harvesting of all five species of Pacific salmon—Chinook, sockeye, coho, chum, and pink—as well as rainbow trout, Arctic char, grayling, northern pike, lake trout, and Dolly Varden.





BBNC Corporate Overview

Mission

Enriching our Native way of life.

Vision

To responsibly steward the land and waters in the Bristol Bay region, celebrate the legacy of its people, and enhance the lives of BBNC shareholders.

Long-Term Priorities

- Secure and grow the financial strength of BBNC to ensure our long-term viability.
- Generate sufficient earnings to fund dividends and other shareholder benefits.
- Develop prudent economic opportunities in the Bristol Bay region through strategic partnerships and leveraging of BBNC resources.
- Enhance shareholder workforce readiness through support of education, training, and workforce development initiatives.
- Balance responsible development and protection of our lands, fisheries, and resources.
- Advance social, cultural, and community initiatives that positively affect shareholders and descendants.

Our Companies

BBNC's success comes from investing in a wide range of industries that operate across the United States and around the world. The subsidiaries are grouped under five business platforms:

- Industrial Services
 - Construction
 - Government Services
 - Seafood
 - Tourism
-

Values

- Respect the people, land and natural resources that are the basis for our culture and the Native way of life.
- Responsibly manage natural resources, prioritizing the cultural and economic value of the Bristol Bay fishery.
- Responsibly manage financial resources, leading to a continuous source of dividends and benefits for our shareholders.
- Maintain integrity and fairness in our dealings with all stakeholders.





Growing Alaska's Economy

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES. ESSENTIAL ALASKA JOBS.



1,380+

EMPLOYEES
IN ALASKA

\$152.8M

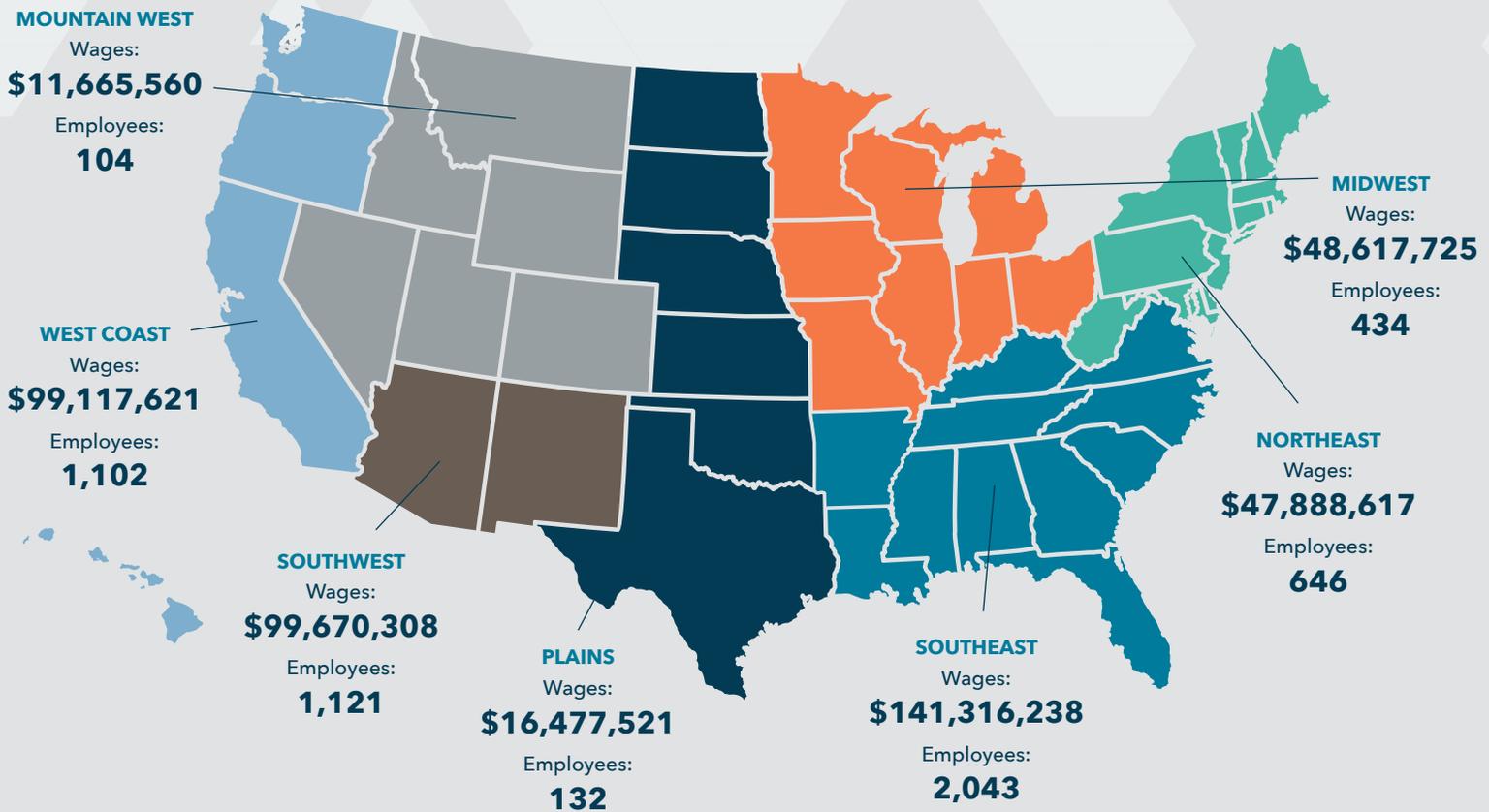
ALASKA
WAGES

Visit BBNC.net for more information on our family of companies.



Growing the Nation's Economy

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIES. ESSENTIAL JOBS.



5,580+

EMPLOYEES
NATIONWIDE
(Excluding Alaska)



\$464.8M

WAGES
NATIONWIDE
(Excluding Alaska)

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