

**TESTIMONY OF NATASHA SINGH**  
**PRESIDENT/CEO, ALASKA NATIVE TRIBAL HEALTH CONSORTIUM**

U.S. Senate Committee on Indian Affairs

“From Disaster to Resilience: Strengthening Tribal Communities through Federal Response,  
Mitigation, and Relocation Programs”

May 6, 2026

Good afternoon, Senator, and thank you for being here in the Yukon–Kuskokwim region and for convening this hearing.

I’m speaking today on behalf of the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium, or ANTHC. We work statewide with communities to construct and support water and sewer infrastructure, and we have been directly involved in many of the communities affected by last fall’s disaster.

ANTHC shares your goal of strengthening community resilience in the face of increasing environmental threats, while also ensuring communities are supported when disaster strikes.

At a high level, the primary challenge we see in Alaska is not a lack of commitment or effort among individuals or organizations, but a lack of communication and coordination.

Today, disaster response, long-term community relocation, and associated infrastructure funding all operate on separate tracks, fragmented across numerous federal agencies.

While the overlap between these efforts is clear, each component involves different agencies with different rules, timelines, and decision makers.

In many cases, it is unclear which state or federal agency is the lead at any given point, and primary responsibility for the many moving pieces is never clearly defined.

This is never a recipe for effective policy.

In our communities, where essential infrastructure, housing, and access to health care are tightly connected, the lack of clear direction and authority can have outsized consequences.

In this policy environment, communities are left to navigate an uncertain and complex funding and regulatory landscape on their own, often while they are still responding to the immediate impacts of a disaster.

For these communities, the status quo is not sustainable. For the people we serve, the existing approach is unacceptable.

This is not a failure of individuals or of any single government agency. Rather, it reflects a lack of alignment in overarching goals and an absence of coordination across federal activities.

At its core, this misalignment stems from two overlapping, but very different, policy objectives: providing an effective response immediately after a disaster, and providing sustained, long-term support as a community navigates rebuilding or relocation.

To address what has become piecemeal federal policy, communities need a clear and dedicated federal agency to evaluate rebuilding or relocation options.

Helping communities identify which federal programs can support the different components of this process, including planning, site evaluation, infrastructure, and housing, should be coordinated through a single agency, even if the work itself involves multiple parts of the federal government.

To make this approach successful, adequate resources for interagency coordination are also essential, so communities can meaningfully participate in and guide this process.

Through both the Halong and Merbok disasters, the federal government has demonstrated that it has the funding, expertise, and capacity to serve as a committed partner to communities.

At the same time, these experiences highlight the policy and funding gaps that emerge when agencies operate strictly within their own lanes rather than working toward a shared end goal.

What our communities need, and what addressing this challenge requires, is a coordinated federal approach grounded in common objectives, clear authorities, and a durable partnership with the communities themselves.

If we are able to align disaster response, infrastructure resilience, and relocation around a community-driven vision, we can move from reactive response to true resilience.

ANTHC stands ready to work alongside our regional, state, and federal partners to help build a system that better meets the needs of our people and our communities.

Thank you for convening this hearing, and for the opportunity to provide testimony on this important issue.