



PRESS RELEASE

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AIDEA Files Amicus Brief in U.S. Supreme Court Defending Alaska Statehood Rights

September 25, 2023 (Anchorage, Alaska) – The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority (AIDEA) today filed an amicus (friend of the court) brief with the U.S. Supreme Court. AIDEA’s brief supports and strengthens the State of Alaska’s challenge to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s decision to stop development of critical minerals owned by Alaska on state land.

EPA's improper decision breaks promises made by the federal government to Alaskans if they accepted statehood. Congress promised Alaskans the right to select and own 102,550,000 acres of land, the minerals in those lands, and control over whether the minerals should be developed. Alaskans accepted the offer of statehood, including ownership and control of state lands. Once accepted by Alaskans, the property rights of these state lands could not be taken away later.

The rights offered by Congress to Alaskans for statehood included:

1. The right to select and receive ownership title to approximately 30% of the state (102.5 million acres) as “statehood lands;”
2. Ownership of all minerals, oil, and gas beneath statehood lands;
3. A right of access across federal and other lands to “prospect for, mine, and remove” state-owned minerals on state lands; (Section 6(i) Statehood Act)
4. The right to manage and decide whether resources should be developed on state lands according to laws passed by the Alaska Legislature and the Alaska Constitution;
5. Title to submerged lands and minerals beneath navigable waters.

In 1957, Congress considered a bill that would offer Alaskans a chance to vote and accept statehood. In considering that bill, members of Congress reviewed how the federal government was managing land in Alaska. They found the federal government owned 98% of the land in Alaska, but had largely failed in the previous 88 years of federal control to develop resources for the benefit of Alaskans or the nation.

Congress passed a bill offering Alaskans the strongest set of sovereign property rights over state lands ever approved in the history of the nation. These rights included ownership of land, minerals, and a right of access across federal land to mine and remove minerals. The new State of Alaska would be in charge of development decisions on state lands. Not the

federal government. Alaskans relied on the offer by Congress of ownership and control of state lands and voted to accept statehood in 1958.

Randy Ruaro, AIDEA Executive Director said, "Sadly, more than six decades after statehood, unelected and unaccountable federal officials are breaking statehood contract promises. This disregard of the law and abuse to Alaskans wanting a better future must stop. AIDEA will fight back and ask the highest court in the land to hold the federal government accountable."

Click [here](#) to view the amicus brief submitted. For information about AIDEA or any of AIDEA's projects, please visit www.aidea.org or contact AIDEA at communications@aidea.org.

About AIDEA:

The Alaska Industrial Development and Export Authority is a public corporation of the State of Alaska. AIDEA's purpose is to promote, develop, and advance the general prosperity and economic welfare of the people of Alaska.

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