

Afognak/Alutiiq LLC Responds to Senate Query on Contracts

Wednesday, 20 May 2009

{audio}/images/stories/mp3/090520.sba8a.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

The system that gives Alaska Native corporations an edge in securing governmental contracts is once again under fire in the Lower 48. A provision in the Small Business Administration's rules for small, minority or disadvantaged businesses allows Native corporations to be given unlimited contracts without bidding on them. The provision was created by former Alaska Senator Ted Stevens, and does not extend to other minorities.

The latest scrutiny comes from Missouri Senator Clair McCaskill, who chairs the Subcommittee on Contracting Oversight. She's planning a July 16 hearing on the issue.

Sarah Lukin (loo-keen) is the spokesperson for the Afognak Native Corporation and its subsidiary, Alutiiq LLC, which has been awarded hundreds of millions of dollars in government contracts over the years. She said this is not the first time Native corporations have been under scrutiny over SBA-8-A contracts.

-- (SBA 1 48
sec "In April of 2006 the ...
economic self-sufficiency.")

She says
the congressional hearings will be an opportunity to educate Senator McCaskill
and others in D.C. about why Native corporations should have the 8-A advantage.

-- (SBA 2 40
sec "We're obviously going ...
and women in the military.")

She said it
was important to remember that even though Native contractors have gotten
billions of dollars in contracts under the 8-A provision, it is still a drop in
the bucket compared to what the federal government contracts out.

-- (SBA 3 37
sec "One of the issues ... facing
challenges on Capital Hill.")

Lukin is
leaving Afognak and Alutiiq LLC. She has taken a position with the Native
American Contractors Association, and will be moving to Washington D.C., just
in time for Senator McCaskill's congressional hearings.

###