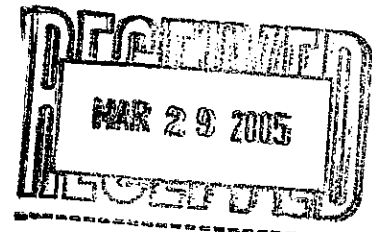




**KAWERAK, INC.** • P.O. Box 948 • Nome, AK 99762



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TELLER  
UNALAKLEET  
WALES  
WHITE MOUNTAIN

March 25, 2005.

Lindsay Lamar  
Alaska Native Justice Center  
121 W. Fireweed Lane, Suite 240  
Anchorage, Alaska 99503

RE: Written Testimony from Merlin Koonooka

Dear Ms. Lamar:

Enclosed is written testimony from Merlin Koonooka. Mr. Koonooka had prepared this testimony for the Law Enforcement hearing back in February of this year. However, with time constraints at the hearing, he did not present it.

Please forward this testimony to the appropriate person at ANJC.

Mr. Koonooka can be contacted at the following address:

Merlin Koonooka  
1 Walrus Way  
P.O. Box 67  
Gambell, Alaska 99742

Should you have any questions, please contact me at (907) 443-4322. Thanks much!

Sincerely,  
**KAWERAK, INC.**

*Myra Ambrose*  
Myra Ambrose  
Executive Secretary

enclosure

cc: Read File March 2005

/mja

From childhood to adulthood, our young people are being subjected to a prolonged state of lawlessness which may have a negative long term effect. Existence of lawlessness is evidenced by widespread manufacture of alcohol (homebrew) and the sale of the product in our dry communities. This results in domestic violence, suicide, abuse, school attendance and performance problems, underage drinking, to name a few impacts.

We live in economically impoverished rural villages and to suffer from lawlessness and injustice is adding insult to the injury, adding to the cycle of helplessness and need.

I come from St. Lawrence Island with a population of 14-1500 people in the communities of Gambell and Savoonga. We find it very hard to police ourselves. In my village of Gambell our need for outside lawmen was so desperate we made a home available free of charge, This in a village where housing is badly needed by local people themselves. To find one of the poorest stand-alone ANCSA village corporations subsidizing housing to outsiders is proof of the gravity of the situation.

I serve in the Kawerak Board of Directors as an elder representative. Kawerak administers our VPSO Program for our region. This past year we experienced difficulties in getting our State Government to continue funding this vital program. I am very disappointed in the way our own State works with us on law enforcement especially in this respect.

Suggestions:

State should continue funding the VPSO program but on a higher level with more training, better pay and back-up. Until this can become a reality, more troopers should be stationed in the rural communities. We must demonstrate that we live in a democratic government and society and that our country goes to war in support of these ideals and policies in faraway places.

If the Governor feels that law and order can not be provided in rural Alaska, can he not declare a state of emergency so that federal marshals may fill the need for the time being. Just the presence of uniformed personnel can provide a feeling of well-being and safety in the minds of our elders and young people.