

Rural Justice Commission
Fred Smith
543-7420
fsmith@avcp.org

Fred Smith, while employed by the Association of Village Council Presidents, may not reflect AVCPs position on the issues I'll speak to.

I'll begin with the premise that an ideal environment would be consistent **local** law enforcement and **local** justice systems that condition and shape the behaviors of societys' members to live within accepted boundaries. And from generation to generation, our children should be growing up with an understanding, acceptance and respect of those accepted boundaries. Local law enforcement and local justice are **tools** to contain our societies members within boundaries that serve to provide for a safe, secure and peaceful environment.

Obviously, here in rural Alaska we're a long way from that ideal. We have sad realities that have and continue to negatively impact every resident in rural Alaska. Some things have to change. Those recommendations you come up with need to be solutions that serve to create a better, safer, more peaceful environment on the ground. Don't recommend solutions that serve to protect the interests of the state, organizations or political interests. We need solutions that will make safer and protect rural Alaskan people, not entities.

I have two recommendations:

- 1) Repeal Alaska as a Public law 280 State.
- 2) Have the U.S. Justice Department mediate a long-term binding agreement between the State of Alaska and Alaskas' tribal governments that result in both forms of government working in concert on this critical issue vs. fighting over jurisdiction and control.

The State of Alaska is not committing the resources necessary to adequately provide for local law enforcement and local justice systems. 20-24 VPSO's are not serving the 48 villages in this region. Picking up juveniles and adults for court processing in Bethel does not serve to deter other similar actions by others within the community. If the State of Alaska cannot and will not obligate the resources for effective law enforcement, we need to place back

on federal burden those services that they currently fund in other American tribal communities. Repeal P.L. 280 for Alaska

The State of Alaska and tribes spend too much time, resources and energy fighting each other. They, collectively, need to use that time, energy and resources fighting crime, that what this is all about. As governments living in a common environment and serving the same people we need to accept and respect each other. We need to place value in each other. We, collectively, are doing a disservice to the people we serve. If have not been successful on our own, the U.S. Justice Department needs to take an active role in mediating a working agreement that results in coordinated, cohesive and effective use of federal, state and tribal resources.

Thank you.