



**Alaska Food Policy Council**

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April 4, 2024

The Honorable Tom Vilsack  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of Agriculture  
1400 Independence Ave., S.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20250

Re: USDA Should Support the Expansion of Pub.L. 93-638 Authority Throughout the Agency

Dear Secretary Vilsack,

On behalf of the [Alaska Food Policy Council](http://www.akfoodpolicycouncil.org) (AFPC), I am writing to urge you to express to the House and Senate Agriculture Committees your public support for the expansion of 638 Indian Self-Determination contracting and Tribal Self-Governance compacting throughout the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

AFPC is a nonprofit organization committed to improving Alaska's food systems. We are one of the only organizations working statewide, across sectors, to improve Alaska's food system. Over 175 agencies and individuals representing Federal and State agencies, Tribal entities, schools, University programs, farmers, fisheries, and food systems businesses are members of the AFPC. **As we look at the next Farm Bill in Congress, supporting Tribal self-determination for administering federal programs is one of AFPC's top policy priorities to help strengthen and build resiliency in Alaska's food system.**

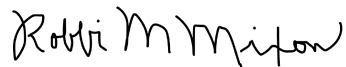
Our Tribal partners have been utilizing 638 authority with great success in Alaska. We have heard from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium and their administration of Alaska's Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), that the ability to bring in traditional foods to FDPIR food boxes, and source from tribal vendors strengthens the resilience and effectiveness of Alaska's food system. This is only one example of opportunities to grow 638 authority in Alaska, and we urge you to support this expansion.

Congress has recognized the benefits of 638 as well. AFPC strongly supports the following marker bills which encompass the importance of expanding 638 to various USDA programs. These include:

- **S. 2354, the ARCTIC Act** (*Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR), Forest Service, Natural Resources Conservation Service, FSIS meat inspections, establishes an Office of Self-Governance*)
- **S. 1780, PRIME Meat Processing in Indian Country Act** (*Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) meat inspection*)
- **S. 2489, FDPIR Tribal Food Sovereignty Act of 2023** (*FDPIR*)
- **S. 2457, A bill to amend the Department of Agriculture Reorganization Act of 1994 to establish an Office of Self-Governance, and for other purposes** (*Establishes an Office of Self-Governance*)

Thank you for your dedication to improving the delivery of USDA services for Indian Country. We look forward to working with you and your staff to ensure that the House and Senate Agriculture Committees are aware of your support for these critical marker bills as we prepare for the upcoming Farm Bill.

Sincerely,



Robbi Mixon, Executive Director  
Alaska Food Policy Council

CC

House Agriculture Committee  
Senate Agriculture Committee  
House Natural Resources Subcommittee on Indigenous People  
Senate Committee on Indian Affairs