

Alejandro Bong Tungul

Washington DC Lobbying Trip Report September 2018

My trip started Friday, September 14th leaving Dutch Harbor to Anchorage on the noon flight. We then headed to Seattle where we stayed over-night then headed to Washington D.C.. We arrived to D.C. in the late afternoon of the 15th of September. We all rested that night and reviewed our packets for the lobbying trip the next day. The extra day gave me a chance to adjust to the time difference and jet-lag.

We began our business on September 17th at 7:30 a.m. having breakfast with Brad Gilman our lobbyist where we went over our schedule for the day. Our first meeting of the day was with Chris Nierman from General Communication Inc. updating us on their status of the fiber optic option that they are planning on providing for our community. He updated that the project is still on hold because the FCC is waiting on Rural Health Care Facilities on payment plans and what their overall ideas are for Alaska.

The second meeting we met with the FCC to gather information regarding the issue on Rural Healthcare funding. Then we spoke with several people in the wireless field regarding GCIs fiber optic cable going to Unalaska. They said they are familiar with what's happening and they are also aware of the needs of our community.

After lunch we met with the environmental division of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers regarding the contaminated areas that the military left behind from WW2. We asked that they help provide funding on cleaning up the contaminated areas that contained PCB (Polychlorinated Biphenyl). We raised our concerns specifically relating to current projects where we have found contaminated soils during development projects and another current issue with the roadway near the fuel dock where oil is getting into our waste water system. They let us know that they are aware of our concerns and are going to review our requests. We are hoping we were heard on the importance of this issue and they will help fund as

soon as funds are available since the health of our community members should be priority.

Around 2:00 p.m. we met with the Civil Works Division of the Corps of Engineers. Their representative Chief Steve Kopecky spoke with us about Unalaska Channel project, where he had relatively positive stuff to say. He thinks that we should come back next year to request funding, which he believes we will receive without any issues.

Our final meeting of the day was with the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Essential Air Service, Kevin Schlemmer. We spoke about the Pen Air bankruptcy which he knew a lot about. We raised our concerns about the effects this decision would have on our community with Pen Air being the only company that provides air service to our community. He mentioned that they are aware of our situation and concerns, but it didn't matter what would happen with Pen Air because Alaska Airlines holds the contract and they will be ultimately responsible with what happens with our flights.

Our first meeting on Tuesday, September 18th was with representatives from Rural Health Resources Administration about Iliuliuk Family and Health Services. We spoke about our afterhours emergency situations and how it is costing a lot of money. There were some possibilities on funding brought up, but funding is scarce, hopeful for some by 2019.

We then proceeded to Capitol Hill and were able to meet with our Congressional Delegation. We were only able to briefly meet with Senator Dan Sullivan because he was busy with the current elections coming up, but with what was talked about, he seemed to really listen to our list of concerns. Next, in Don Young's absence, we met with his staff and brought up the same concerns that we had previously done with Senator Dan Sullivan. The conversations with his staff went very well with them asking a lot of questions and answering some of ours.

Our last meeting of the day was with Senator Lisa Murkowski who spent quite a bit of time with us and all the staff. She was very interested in what we all had to say and our communities concerns, which she was already aware of most of

them. I enjoyed speaking with her very much because she responded to all of our questions. She's got a lot of good ideas that could possibly positively impact our community. Overall we had a very good meeting with Congressional Delegation, especially with Senator Murkowski.

Our final day started with the United States Coast Guard and their presence in Unalaska. We stated we noticed that they have been in town a lot more and they told us it was because they were retiring their old ship and bringing in new ones that would respond to emergency calls a lot sooner than before. This was positive to hear with the recent accidents out in the Bering Sea. We spoke about the port and a few other concerns, but overall we thanked them for their services and that we appreciate them being in Unalaska.

After lunch we met the Chris Oliver, the Chief of the National Marine Fisheries Services about the changing water temperatures and the impact it is having on our ocean wild life. We made sure we voiced our support for NOAA and that we keep looking forward with working with them and the work and research they do for our fisheries and ocean.

Our last meeting was a summary report on all the meetings we had overall with the Alaska Governor's Office staff person, Amy Dobson. We brought up our list of concerns that we wanted addressed such as Captains Bay Road, Fiber Optic Cable, Peninsula Airways Bankruptcy, Unalaska Channel Dredging Entrance, Dock Project, and cleaning up the hazardous sludge and PCBs from all the old transformers.

Overall, we were able to do a lot of lobbying and meet with quite a bit of people regarding the concerns we are having in our community. We are anticipating for positive results and responses to all the issues we brought to Washington D.C.'s attention that need to be addressed and that we hopefully get funding for.