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NEWS RELEASE



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**STATE ARGUES RURAL PUBLIC SAFETY CASE
BEFORE ALASKA SUPREME COURT TODAY**

(Anchorage, AK) – The State of Alaska presented its arguments in *Alaska Intertribal Council v. State* before the Alaska Supreme Court Tuesday afternoon, stating that assignments of Alaska State Troopers is a matter for the Legislature and Department of Public Safety rather than the courts to resolve.

The claims in the case allege that the state under allocates police protection provided by Alaska State Troopers to isolated communities in comparison to communities on the road system also protected by Troopers.

The state believes that the Department of Public Safety is better suited than the courts to properly determine the crime risk involved and, based on available appropriations, determine priorities for the assignment of troopers.

“There is no question that we need more law enforcement resources in rural Alaska,” Renkes noted. “But there is also no question that the need for more law enforcement is not the result of discrimination. We can do a better job with law enforcement across Alaska and our Administration is committed to meeting that challenge.”

Alaska Native villages, individuals, the AITC, and the Native Justice Center filed the original case, which was in trial for 10 days before the Honorable Judge Sharon Gleason who ruled in favor of the state on all AITC’s claims.

The trial court concluded that there was no disparity in the allocation of police services to rural, isolated communities. The lower court found that while there were differences in the way police protection is provided in various areas of the state, those differences were not the product of any intent to discriminate on the basis of race. It found that the decisions were the product of rational judgment on the part of the Department of Public Safety.

“This is an important case because it enabled a thorough and independent examination of the manner in which police protection is provided by the Alaska State Troopers to the various areas of the state under their jurisdiction,” Renkes added.

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