



Senator Georgianna Lincoln

Alaska State Legislature, District C
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Sponsor Statement for Senate Bill 132

“An Act removing the Old Minto town site from the Minto Flats State Game Refuge and authorizing the Department of Natural Resources to convey certain land at the historic Old Minto site to the Native Village of Minto.”

The CS you have before you has technical substitute language from DNR. DNR indicates that with their language, the fiscal note will go to zero.

This bill is a simple bill. It transfers ownership of about 32 acres of state land formerly held by the Village of Minto at their old townsite.

Minto is in the western-most portion of traditional Tanana Athabascan territory. During the late 1800s, some members of the Minto band traveled to Tanana, Rampart and Fort Yukon to trade furs for manufactured goods, tea and flour. With the discovery of gold north of Fairbanks in 1902, steamboats began to navigate the Tanana River, bringing goods and new residents into the area. Old Minto became a permanent settlement when some members of the Minto band built log cabins there, on the bank of the Tanana River. Other families lived in tents on a seasonal basis. A BIA school was established in 1937, but most families still did not live in Minto year-round until the 1950s. The Minto band was eventually joined by families from Nenana, Toklat, Crossjacket and Chena. The village was relocated to its present location, 40 miles north of the old site, in 1969 due to repeated flooding and erosion. The present site, which was established on a Native Allotment, had been used as a fall and winter camp since the early 1900s.

The state eventually took over the land, and in 1988, included it in the Minto Flats State Game Refuge. Despite relocation, the people of Minto maintain a strong physical commitment to Old Minto. Elders and their descendents go there year-round to camp. The cabins, church, community hall, store, and gravesites still exist today. Currently, the Interior Athabascan Cultural Heritage Education Institute (ACHEI) holds a “Public and Charitable Lease” for a youth encampment on the site until 2052. An Alcohol Recovery camp is also held at Old Minto and administered by Tanana Chiefs Conference. You’ll find letters of support from both of these organizations, and their representatives are on line to answer any questions.

Thank you for hearing our bill today.