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CVRF Engages Residents with Community Meetings

ANCHORAGE, AK - During the last week of June, members of the Board of Directors of Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) visited the communities of Quinhagak, Tununak, Toksook Bay, and Nome to have open-forum discussions about the Community Development Quota ("CDQ") program. A key topic of conversation was discussing how to persuade Alaska's congressional delegation to treat all residents of the CDQ program fairly and equitably.

At the meetings in Quinhagak, Tununak, and Toksook Bay, CVRF's democratically-elected board members talked to CVRF region residents about the company's programs and projects, discussed infrastructure investments, and shared the results of a recent [survey](#) of the 20 western Alaska communities CVRF serves. The Board members also provided information about the inequality that currently exists in the CDQ program and the impact that has had on CVRF. The presentations were accompanied by time for open dialogue with the community. This format allowed residents and members of the Board to share ideas, concerns, and suggestions with one another.

"We host these community meetings because we want to give updated information to the residents we represent and collect feedback on how we are doing," said Richard Jung, CVRF Board Chairman from Napakiak. "They are us and we are them. We are honored that these residents elected us to represent them and excited to share some of the company's accomplishments over the past year."

Following the meetings in CVRF's communities, members of the Board continued north to host a community meeting in Nome. A recent [economic needs assessment](#) commissioned by CVRF found that the communities served by Norton Sound Economic Development Corporation (NSEDC), including Nome, face economic challenges similar to those faced by the communities CVRF serves. The report concludes that the two most populous groups in the CDQ program face high levels of unemployment and poverty and have average household sizes nearly twice the statewide average.

As in the meetings in Quinhagak, Tununak, and Toksook Bay, at the meeting in Nome, CVRF Board members discussed the inequitable CDQ allocations and the impact that population-based allocations could have. CVRF shared its estimates that the people of the CVRF and NSEDC regions would benefit from an additional \$10

million in annual revenue if the CDQ allocations were fixed to treat all residents of the program equitably. The earnings from the additional resource would go a long way towards addressing the high unemployment, lack of housing, and public safety issues facing the communities the two groups serve.

“We are serving the neediest of the neediest, the poorest of the poor, but we are given the least to work with per person,” said Stephen Maxie, Jr., CVRF Vice President from Napaskiak. “That’s not fair. The CDQ program is a good program, but it is broken. Other federal programs distribute aid by population and need. This one should, too. We want to be treated fairly. If we were, we could do so much more for our people.”

CVRF plans to continue hosting community meetings throughout the summer. The next round is scheduled to take place in Goodnews Bay and Platinum on July 17 and in Mekoryuk and Chefornek on July 18.

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Coastal Villages Region Fund (CVRF) is a 501(c)(4) Alaska non-profit corporation with 20 member communities located along the west coast of Alaska, from Scammon Bay to Platinum. It is one of six Community Development Quota (CDQ) groups granted fishing rights in the Bering Sea to foster sustainable and diversified local economies in western Alaska.

CVRF is dedicated to creating sensible, tangible, and long-term economic development opportunities that generate hope for the more than 9,300 residents of its communities. CVRF is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of one member elected from each community. It is the largest Alaskan-owned seafood company in history and the first CDQ group to own and control the vessels that harvest the vast majority of its CDQ allocations.

For more information, visit www.CoastalVillages.org and www.facebook.com/CoastalVillagesRegionFund.