

Pat Pitney

President

Butrovich Bldg, Ste. 202, 2025 Yukon Drive  
P.O. Box 755000, Fairbanks, AK 99775-5000  
Phone: (907) 450-8000; Fax: (907) 450-8012  
Email: [ua.president@alaska.edu](mailto:ua.president@alaska.edu)  
[www.alaska.edu](http://www.alaska.edu)



January 6, 2023

Dear UA Community,

Over winter break, we received great news that our days of being a land grant university without our full land grant had finally come to an end. Word spread quickly so you may have heard that President Biden signed into law a bill that provides many good things for the university, but chief among them is the resolution of our long-standing effort to acquire 360,000 acres of land to complete our land grant allotment promised so many years ago.

The law establishes a framework for the university to work with the state Dept. of Natural Resources to jointly identify up to 500,000 acres of federal land to be conveyed to the state. It would require the Bureau of Land Management to survey the selection and work with UA to transfer up to 360,000 acres of state land to the university. The UA Lands office already has selected 200,000 acres and provided the selection to DNR for review. The acreage ultimately transferred to UA would be deducted from Alaska's outstanding statehood lands entitlement and managed by the UA for the benefit of our students and to further meet our mission of teaching, research and workforce development for Alaska.

We are most grateful to Senator Lisa Murkowski who is responsible for this tremendous outcome. I also want to thank Representative Mary Peltola and Governor Dunleavy for their leadership on this issue and Sen. Dan Sullivan for his support of the UA Fiscal Foundation Act. I also want to recognize the bipartisan backing we've had from our Alaska businesses, organizations, and state leaders who advocated for this positive outcome.

As with many land issues in Alaska, original congressional intent to convey lands to the university has been eroded by a complex history of federal laws and adverse court rulings. As a result the University of Alaska has one of the smallest allotments of any land grant institution. With the passage of this act, the university, working with the state, now has four years to jointly select 500,000 acres of previously federal land of which up to 360,000 acres will be conveyed to the university to fulfill the unmet land grant.

Historically the UA Lands office earns revenue from the university's existing acreage that includes real estate, timber sales, mining, gravel sales and other activities. Income from UA's lands has funded the highly successful UA Scholars Program, awarding \$12,000 scholarships to the top 10 percent of graduates from each Alaska high school who attend UA. Land earnings have also supported teaching and research in natural resources, fisheries/ocean science, biology, agriculture, minerals, and education.

While this is fantastic news for the long-term, there is still a long way to go before the 360,000 acres are identified and conveyed to the university, and even more time before the university will be able to monetize the lands conveyed.

I want to thank everyone who has contributed to this long-standing effort including our federal relations team, general counsel's office, UA Land office and the hard work of many staff to find a solution to the long-standing land deficit.

Sincerely,  
UA President Pat Pitney