As someone who relies on public lands as a means of enjoying the outdoors, I find this land transfer concerning. Alaska Natives deserve more economic opportunity but not at the expense of public lands through privatization. Across Alaska, be it federal, state, or local land, there is an increasing problem of using public funds and/or public resources to fund private enterprise and, in doing so, taking away ownership from the American populace. Thompson Pass is the only official access to the alpine in the area, is publicly accessible, and is very valuable to the public interest to remain public.

The Chugach Native Corporation has not identified, in a way that is easily found, any reasons for how removing this public landmark from the public domain is beneficial to anyone but a few shareholders and board members that would profit by taking over something that taxpayers have spent considerable money on to maintain over the years. This no-bid takeover demonstrates the modern limitations of Native Corporations being "of minority and economically disadvantaged business enterprise[s]" (43 USC 1626(e)) as they continue to accumulate more and more wealth and power thanks to no competition. Any continued economic disadvantage of their minority shareholders is thanks to toxic corporate economics that are well documented across our society. This land transfer will not correct or mitigate that. At the same time, Alaska Natives rightfully deserve whatever they were promised through federal treaty, and it is immoral to simply give them the land that nobody else wants; that is one reason why the Lower 48 tribes are in such dire economic distress. I respect BLM's difficulty in balancing the public good with past history and future expectations.

If Chugach Native Corporation (GNC) already owns the native land strip in the river valley leading into the Copper River, they have every right to reasonable access to that land. Otherwise, giving someone land that they can’t access is about as good as not having land at all. At the very least, GNC should be allowed to build a road to the land that is already allotted to them. I would like to see this road open to the public, even if it means a nominal use fee that can go toward helping GNC recover the cost of expanding my ability to enjoy the surrounding public lands.

As an alpine enthusiast, the expected impact to me with this land transfer is honestly minimal. I have to acknowledge that the landscape that I know and love isn’t going to exist in 50 years, and that’s Nature’s fault, not BLM or any Native Corporation. The glaciers that I admire from afar are going to melt away before I get to touch and appreciate them. Because of this, I am not opposed to development in the region if it means more access points into the mountains that, right now, only the rich who can afford helicopters get to appreciate. These roads would have to be paid for, and given GCN’s history, that will likely mean that they are going to log the spruce trees in the region, but this does lead to roads and those roads should be considered public access.

If BLM chooses to go along with this transfer because it really will help GCN’s minority shareholders improve their lives, either due to road access to their own water resources that they cannot currently get to, or through the expansion of subsistence hunting rights in that region as the landscape changes and more bear and moose move in, I would like to see the area still fall within the public domain while also allowing GCN to generate revenue for their people.

In summation:

1. Any land that GCN receives that is currently managed by BLM should remain publicly accessible as the American public, of which Natives are included, have already paid for the land through taxes and support.
2. GCN should be allowed to utilize the public land if it will not limit current public access and lead to substantial benefits for their minority shareholders (not just majority shareholders), included but not limited to:
   1. Right to establish road access to any currently held land. The road should remain public where it crosses currently-public land.
   2. The right to establish selective logging roads in the region. These roads should remain public.
   3. The right to priority subsistence hunting on currently-public land.
   4. A percentage of value extracted from the region through resource development or tourism should be reinvested toward further access and conservation of the surrounding region.

I do believe that there is a way in which BLM, the public, and GCN can all work together to develop the region in a way that promotes economics, builds upon recreational opportunities in the region, and doesn’t impact the rights of the public to access lands that are currently public.