



National
Congress of
American
Indians

Tribal Unity Impact Week

October 11-13, 2011

Dear Members of Congress,

Our undersigned Tribal organizations are supporting a Tribal Unity Impact Week in Washington, DC, on October 11th - 13th, 2011. We are joining together to make this petition to Congress urging action to protect tribal communities and the federal trust responsibility on the following key issues:

- 1) The Indian Budget – Under recently enacted deficit reduction legislation, Congress is undertaking an extraordinary process to identify \$1.5 trillion in federal budget cuts over the next ten years. Within this process, the federal trust responsibility must be honored and vital tribal programs must not lose funding at the expense of balancing the national budget.
- 2) Land Restoration – The Secretary of Interior’s authority to take land into trust for Indian tribes is a key component of tribal sovereignty and must not be diminished within the bundle of trust responsibilities owed each federally recognized Indian tribe.
- 3) Protecting Native Women – The Department of Justice recently proposed tribe-specific provisions within the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) Reauthorization which would allow Indian tribes to prosecute non-Indian offenders for the limited crimes of dating violence, domestic violence, and violations of protective orders.

Each of these issues are critical to tribal self-governance and self-determination principles, and essential to the federal government’s trust responsibility to Indian tribes.

Tribes and tribal entities have patiently participated in the political process, but recognizing the urgency of these pressing issues, we are now increasing our call for congressional action. As members of Congress are well aware, Article I, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution grants Congress exclusive authority to regulate our Nation’s relationship with Indian tribes. Collectively, we interpret this to necessitate that Congress act in a timely manner when questions of tribal sovereignty and self-governance are placed squarely before it. Such is the case with each of the aforementioned key issues.

In closing, we reiterate the need for Congress to act during this session to further these initiatives that are critical to the protection of the federal trust responsibility. We stand together to make Indian Country better. We call on you to stand with us today, so we might stand together stronger, in the future.

Tribes and Intertribal Organizations Standing Together in Support:

Jefferson Keel, President
National Congress of American Indians
Organizing Co-host

Brian Patterson, President
United South and Eastern Tribes
Organizing Co-host

United Tribes



of North Dakota



Fawn Sharp, President
Affiliated Tribes of
Northwest Indians

Julie Kitka, President
Alaska Federation of Natives

**Chandler Sanchez,
Chairman**
All Indian Pueblo Council

Robin Danner, President
Council for Native Hawaiian
Advancement

Mark Romero, Chairman
California Association of
Tribal Governments

Tex Hall, President
Great Plains Tribal Chairman
Association

**Mellor Willie,
Executive Director**
Native American Indian
Housing Council

Ben Shelly, President
Navajo Nation

Diane Enos, President
Inter Tribal Council
of Arizona

David Gipp, President
United Tribes of
North Dakota



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