



Tribal Unity Impact Week October 11-13, 2011

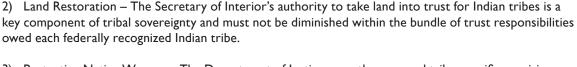


Dear Members of Congress,

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:



I) 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.





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







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