

May 13: USET SPF Action Alert: Carcieri Bill to be Considered in the House WEDNESDAY 5/15

Dear USET SPF Membership,

We are writing to inform you that [H.R. 375](#) [bill text linked], Representative Tom Cole (R-OK) and Betty McCollum's (D-MN) bill to restore equity to the federal fee-to-trust process is expected to come up for a vote in the U.S. House of Representatives this **Wednesday, May 15th**. As with last week, it will be considered under a '[suspension of the rules](#)' [process information linked], which requires a 2/3 majority to pass. This development comes after House Leadership chose to pull the bill from consideration at the last moment due to controversy and misinformation generated by a [tweet from the President](#) [article linked] last Wednesday. USET SPF issued a [press release](#) [linked] in response to the tweet condemning the President's continued disrespect and disregard for Indian Country.

As you know, USET SPF has been advocating for a fix to the Supreme Court decision in *Carcieri v. Salazar*, since it was handed down in 2009. *Carcieri* has created a deeply inequitable 2-class system, in which some Tribal Nations have the ability to restore their homelands and others do not. This 2-class system serves to deny these Tribal Nations a critical component of the trust relationship, vital aspects of the exercise of inherent sovereignty, and the opportunity to qualify for several government programs.

H.R. 375 contains the two features necessary to restore parity to the land-into-trust process: (1) a reaffirmation of the status of current trust lands; and (2) confirmation that the Secretary has authority to take land into trust for all federally recognized Tribal Nations.

As the House of Representatives considers passage of H.R. 375, it is vital that members of Congress hear from Tribal Nations on the importance of this simple correction to a truly misguided Supreme Court decision. That is why we are urging USET SPF membership to reach out to your Representative(s) and tell them:

1. **[Tribal Nation]** is counting on you to vote in favor of H.R. 375 when it comes up for a vote on the House floor.
2. H.R. 375 is bi-partisan legislation supported by a diverse majority of Tribal Nations and organizations that would simply ensure **all** federally-recognized Tribal Nations have the ability to restore their homelands through a rigorous trust land acquisition process.
3. The federal government should ensure every Tribal Nation has the opportunity to restore its homelands, regardless of the concerns of other units of government, private citizens, or other interests. This is a necessary function of the U.S. government in delivering upon the trust responsibility and obligations to Tribal Nations.
4. The bill does only two things: 1. It stabilizes the existing Tribal land base by reaffirming lands already held in trust and 2. It restores parity to the land-into-trust process by confirming that the Secretary of the Interior has the authority to acquire lands for **all** federally-recognized Tribal Nations.

To find your Representative and receive office contact information, please visit the House's "[Find Your Representative](#)" page [LINKED].

To further assist you with these conversations, we provide the following:

- [USET SPF Testimony for the Record of the HNR Hearing on H.R. 375](#)
- [Inter-Tribal Org Sign-On Letter](#)

We will continue to follow the progress of H.R. 375 and provide updates as they become available. Please note that as part of our efforts to expand and strengthen our advocacy, as well as to further elevate our regional voice across Indian Country, this action request has also been sent to our organizational partners and allies.

Thank you,

Liz Malerba ~ *Citizen of the Mohegan Tribe*

Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs

United South and Eastern Tribes

Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF)

400 North Capitol Street, Suite 585

Washington, D.C. 20001

Office: 202-624-3550

Cell: 615-838-5906

Fax: 202-393-5218

lmalerba@usetinc.org

www.usetinc.org

"The United States expects all nations to live up to their treaty obligations; it should live up to its own."

– U.S. Commission on Civil Rights briefing report, *Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans*