

Congress of the United States

Washington, D.C. 20515

September 14, 2018

The Honorable Rob Bishop
Chairman
Committee on Natural Resources

The Honorable Raúl M. Grijalva
Ranking Member
Committee on Natural Resources

Dear Chairman Bishop and Ranking Member Grijalva,

Thank you for your strong support of economic prosperity in tribal communities. As you know, tribal communities and national and regional organizations representing Indian tribes and native-owned businesses across the country have been calling on this Congress, and previous Congresses, to enact meaningful legislation to increase investments in business and economic development, entrepreneurship, job creation, and overall improvement in tribal economies.

That is why we introduced H.R. 4506, the Jobs for Tribes Act. Our bill combined two Senate measures— S. 1116, the Indian Community Economic Enhancement Act, and S. 607, the Native American Business Incubators Program Act—with a third title, the Indigenous Peoples Exchange and Economic Cooperation Act. Witnesses at your January 17 and July 24 hearings testified that H.R. 4506 would make important, long-sought programmatic improvements to enhance business and economic development in Indian Country. If passed into law, the bill would unleash the entrepreneurial spirit in tribal communities to create jobs and improve livelihoods and open the door to new partnerships among indigenous communities across the Americas.

We appreciate your hard work, and the hard work of your staff, in advancing H.R. 4506 and achieving committee approval of the measure. Nonetheless, given the limited number of legislative days remaining in the 115th Congress, we are now of the view that the most expeditious path to enactment is House approval of two Senate measures —S. 1116, the Indian Community Economic Enhancement Act, and S. 607, the Native American Business Incubators Program Act. These bills have both passed the Senate and are supported by the same coalition of tribal stakeholders that have supported H.R. 4506. Therefore, we respectfully request that you swiftly mark up and report out S. 1116 and S. 607 and ask House leaders to schedule them for consideration on the suspension calendar in the last week of this month. Likewise, we hope you will work with us advance title III of the bill, the Indigenous Peoples Exchange and Economic Cooperation Act, in the next Congress.

Thank you for considering our request. We look forward to your prompt action and reply.

Sincerely,


NORMA J. TORRES
Member of Congress


TOM COLE
Member of Congress