



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2004:045

TRIBAL OPERATIONS FUNDING

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-four (24) federally recognized tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set objectives under the Clean Air Act (CWA) for increasing the percentage of Tribal populations protected from unhealthy levels of criteria pollutants, increasing air monitoring in Indian country, increasing the tools available to characterize and assess air toxics trends in Indian country; develop means and strategies for increasing information, building Tribal capacity to administer air programs, assisting Tribes to participate in regional and national air quality initiatives; and providing Tribes with tools and assistance to address indoor air toxics concerns; and
- WHEREAS,** Indian tribes rely on Tribal Air Grant funding under the Clean Air Act to support the development and maintenance of their outdoor air programs; Indoor Air Quality Grants and Indoor Radon Abatement Act grants to support the development and maintenance of indoor air programs; funding from Resource Conservation Recovery Act (RCRA) and General Assistance Program (GAP) to support their waste management programs; and
- WHEREAS,** EPA has set objectives under the CWA to protect human health in Indian country by reducing exposure to contaminants in drinking water, fish, shellfish, and recreational waters; to protect the quality of coastal and ocean waters, river, lakes, and streams on Tribal watersheds; and conduct leading edge research to develop a sound scientific foundation for approaches to achieve these objectives; and
- WHEREAS,** Indian tribes rely on CWA 106 funding to address water pollution control concerns that satisfy appropriate negotiated criteria and resources to develop and maintain fully functioning water pollution control programs; CWA Section 319 funds to support the development and operation of Tribal nonpoint source programs and to implement environmental improvement projects such as stream restoration, grazing management, storm water control, forestry and habitat protection activities; CWA 104(b)(3) funding to support Tribal wetlands assessment, monitoring, planning and pilot project activities, and to develop locally or participate in regional long-term and/or watershed-based restoration, protection and enhancement efforts necessary to ensure the health and quality of the nation's wetlands; Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA) construction, capacity and supervision grants to provide clean and safe drinking water to all Indian country communities; and
- WHEREAS,** every year the Tribes have, through Tribal Caucus and Tribal Operations Committee (TC-TOC) developed and submitted an environmental budget; and
- WHEREAS,** every year the budget is severely compromised by federal government decisions; and
- WHEREAS,** environmental and health conditions in Indian country continue to suffer due to lack of adequate financial and technical support for the 562 Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** funding levels for state environmental programs have increased steadily since 1972; while twenty years later funding for tribal environmental programs has remained stagnant, be it

“Because there is strength in Unity”

USET Resolution 2004:045

RESOLVED the USET Board of Directors strongly urge the increase in level of support for all EPA programs in Indian country by implementing the TC-TOC 2005 and 2006 budgets, and be it further

RESOLVED that EPA human resources, and travel expenses to support Tribal programs be increased in order to bring the Tribes into the 21st Century.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Impact Week Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Arlington, VA, on Thursday, February 5, 2004.



Keller George, President
United South & Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Beverly M. Wright, Secretary
United South & Eastern Tribes, Inc.

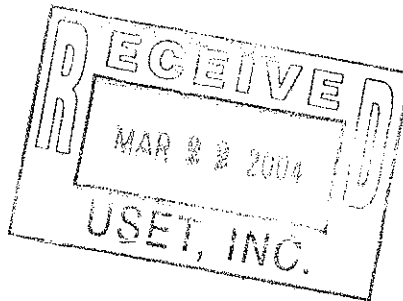


UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20460

MAR 17 2004

OFFICE OF
WATER

James T. Martin
Executive Director
United Southern and Eastern Tribes, Inc.
711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37214



Dear Mr. Martin:

On behalf of the Administrator, I would like to thank you and the United Southern and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) tribes for your contributions to the partnership between EPA and the tribes. We look forward to working with you on continuing that partnership. The Administrator has asked me to respond to your letter of February 20, 2004, regarding the two resolutions passed by USET at your February 2004 meeting in Arlington, VA.

Let me respond to each resolution separately:

Resolution #2004:044 regarding support for the **USET Environmental Liaison position**.

EPA recognizes the value of having staff with dedicated responsibilities for communication, analysis, advice, and support on environmental program issues with USET member governments. In addition to Region 4's contribution toward this position, EPA's American Indian Environmental Office (AIEO) has committed to providing support for the position. EPA Tribal Program's ultimate goal sustained EPA Regional and tribal support for the position.

Resolution #2004:045 regarding support for **Tribal Program Operations**.

EPA's shared goal with tribes continues to be ensuring that tribes can protect human health and the environment in Indian country in a manner best suited to their unique cultural, demographic and institutional characteristics. In the current climate of reduced funding across the Federal government, EPA has in many cases maintained, or even increased, the levels of funding available to tribal governments for environmental programs. For example, the appropriation for the Indian Environmental General Assistance Program (GAP) includes a \$5 million increase in fiscal year 2004. EPA's overall tribal program funding for fiscal year 2004 has increased to \$234 million. Tribal Caucus budget input has been a valuable reminder of tribal needs and has been carefully reviewed and considered in our budget and planning decisions in the past. I expect that consideration to continue.

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Once again, thank you for your continuing efforts on the behalf of tribal environmental programs. If you have any questions please contact Carol Jorgensen, Director of EPA's American Indian Environmental Office at (202) 564-0303.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ben H. Grumbles". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B".

Benjamin H. Grumbles
Acting Assistant Administrator