



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2008:046

SUPPORT FOR REAUTHORIZATION OF NATIVE AMERICAN HOUSING ASSISTANCE AND SELF-DETERMINATION ACT OF 1996 IN 2008

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-five (25) 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,** legislation is pending in both the U.S. House of Representatives and U.S. Senate (H.R.2786 and S.2062, respectively) to amend and reauthorize the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act of 1996 (P.L. 104-330), commonly known as NAHASDA; and
- WHEREAS,** NAHASDA is the main legal authority for the United States to fulfill its trust obligations to low-income American Indians and Alaska Natives (AI/AN) to provide safe, decent and sanitary housing; and
- WHEREAS,** NAHASDA establishes the Indian Housing Block Grant (IHBG) and authorizes funding for housing and housing-related infrastructure and community development in AI/AN communities; and
- WHEREAS,** a membership dispute has recently arisen between the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma (Nation) and the Cherokee Freedmen and has resulted in the Congressional Black Caucus' (CBC) involvement in the dispute; and
- WHEREAS,** the CBC sent a letter to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid indicating its intent to actively oppose the reauthorization of NAHASDA unless a provision is contained within it that denies Federal housing funds to the Cherokee Nation unless the Nation recognizes all Cherokee Freedmen and their descendants as Tribal citizens of the Nation; and
- WHEREAS,** blockage of reauthorization will deny the members of 561 Tribes and Alaskan Native Villages the quality of life guaranteed by the Preamble of the Constitution of the United States, violates their civil rights provided in the Constitution, and denies the indigenous peoples of the United States their equal rights to general welfare and the blessings of liberty and prosperity; and
- WHEREAS,** USET is concerned that this membership dispute may upend the NAHASDA reauthorization legislation and in the process impact hundreds of thousands of low-income AI/AN families; and
- WHEREAS,** USET believes that in instances where grievances may not be pursued in courts of competent jurisdiction, the involvement of the Congress may be warranted and justified; and
- WHEREAS,** USET believes that because a resolution of the membership dispute is being pursued in Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Tribal court and Federal court, congressional intervention is premature, untimely, and inappropriate; and

"Because there is strength in Unity"

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WHEREAS, preventing the reauthorization of NAHASDA in 2008 because of a membership dispute involving a single Indian Tribe undermines long-standing congressional support for Indian Tribes, Alaska Native Villages, Indian self-determination, and Tribal self-governance; and

WHEREAS, in order to meet the pressing housing needs of all of Indian Country, including those of USET members, USET wishes to express its strong support for the reauthorization of NAHASDA as approved by the Senate in 2008; therefore, be it

RESOLVED the USET Board of Directors urges the U.S. Congress and its constituent members, committees, and organizations to:

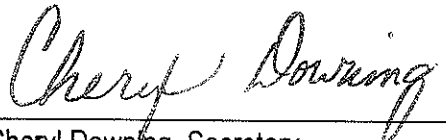
- (1) Recognize the importance of NAHASDA reauthorization to low-income American Indian and Alaska Native families;
- (2) Acknowledge that the impact of the proposed "Cherokee Freedmen amendments" will have negative impacts far beyond the Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma or its members;
- (3) Acknowledge that legal proceedings are now pending in both Cherokee Nation of Oklahoma Tribal court and Federal court that have the potential to resolve these matters; and
- (4) Support legislation to reauthorize the NAHASDA that does not include amendments, provisions, or other language involving the Cherokee Nation Freedmen dispute.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Semi-Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Cherokee, NC, on Thursday, May 8, 2008.



Brian Patterson, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Cheryl Downing, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.