



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2008:013

OPPOSITION TO REDISTRIBUTION OF TRIBAL PRIORITY ALLOCATION FUNDS

- 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,** in the Fiscal Year 2006, 2007, and 2008 President's Budget Requests to Congress, the Administration included language to reform Tribal Priority Allocation (TPA) distribution and states its belief that TPA could be improved by targeting funding to the areas of greatest need; and
- WHEREAS,** TPA is the embodiment of the federal policy of Indian self-determination and provides Tribes with the resources for governmental services at the local level; and
- WHEREAS,** the federal trust responsibility is the legal commitment made by the United States Government to Indian Tribes when Indian lands were ceded to the United States. This commitment is codified in treaties, federal law, executive orders, judicial opinions, and international doctrine; and
- WHEREAS,** the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) has a legal and moral obligation to fulfill federal trust responsibilities; and
- WHEREAS,** the benefits, protections and services provided to Tribal Governments are based not on need, but on Indian Tribes' status derived from and supported in the Constitution, treaties, and other federal law; and
- WHEREAS,** redistributing TPA to the neediest Tribes, or means testing federal funds, violates treaty responsibilities and the federal trust relationship with Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** means testing would unfairly target Indian Tribes. To subject Tribal Governments to a means test would have the discriminatory effect of singling Tribes out for treatment not required of states, counties, cities or other units of government. States and counties are not penalized for efficiency, for increasing their tax base or collecting more taxes, for generating more revenue, or for creating more surpluses, which are often returned to the citizens without affecting their eligibility for federal contributions or assistance; and
- WHEREAS,** Tribal Governments are more concerned by the unequal status of American Indians as a population compared to the United States as a whole rather than inequities between Tribes, and
- WHEREAS,** means testing would be economically counterproductive. Although a few Tribes have gained some measure of economic success over the last decade, by and large, Indian communities are still relatively poor. Real per capita income of Indians living on reservation is still less than half of the national average, and the unemployment rate is still double the rest of the country. In this environment, a federal disincentive to creating economic opportunity would be devastating. To means test federal outlays to Indian Tribes at a time when Tribal Governments are beginning to rebuild their economies and infrastructure would simply push Tribes back into the dire circumstances from which they are attempting to rise; therefore, be it

"Because there is strength in Unity"

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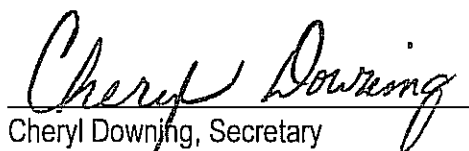
RESOLVED the USET Board of Directors opposes any type of means testing for the funding of federal Indian programs against Tribal Governmental revenue.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Marksville, LA, on Thursday, October 18, 2007.



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



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