



United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

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February 26, 2016

Commissioner Martin R. Castro
Chairman
U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
1331 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Ste 1150
Washington, DC 20425

Dear Chairman Castro,

On behalf of United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF), we write to offer strong support for the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights' efforts to update its 2003 "Quiet Crisis" Report, as well as to request that the report speak to a number of priority issues identified by our Board of Directors via the enclosed resolution. USET SPF is a non-profit, inter-tribal organization representing 26 federally recognized Indian Tribes from Texas to Florida and up to Maine¹. USET is dedicated to enhancing the development of federally recognized Indian Tribes, to improving the capabilities of Tribal governments, and assisting USET Member Tribes in dealing effectively with public policy issues and in serving the broad needs of Indian people.

The 2003 Quiet Crisis report revealed that federal funding directed to American Indians through programs at federal agencies had not been sufficient to address the basic and very urgent needs of indigenous peoples, in spite of a legal trust obligation that includes a fiduciary responsibility. In 2016, this reality remains throughout the federal system. As the Commission seeks to issue a new report that will again show the disparities in funding and other obstacles that continue to face our nation's first peoples, the USET SPF Board of Directors has identified seven priority issues worthy of additional examination. These priorities aim to shed light on a number of systemic issues impeding full execution of the federal trust responsibility and obligations to Tribes.

USET SPF applauds U.S. Commission on Civil Rights for its commitment to updating the "Quiet Crisis" report and respectfully requests the inclusion of our seven priority issues in the final document. We, too, are committed to this update and stand ready to assist the Commission in this endeavor. Should any of our priorities require further dialogue or generate additional questions, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Liz Malerba, USET SPF Director

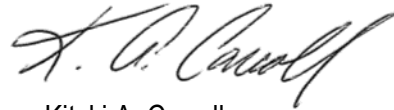
¹ USET SPF member Tribal Nations include: Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas (TX), Aroostook Band of Micmac Indians (ME), Catawba Indian Nation (SC), Cayuga Nation (NY), Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Coushatta Tribe of Louisiana (LA), Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians (NC), Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians (ME), Jena Band of Choctaw Indians (LA), Mashantucket Pequot Indian Tribe (CT), Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe (MA), Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida (FL), Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MS), Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut (CT), Narragansett Indian Tribe (RI), Oneida Indian Nation (NY), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township (ME), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point (ME), Penobscot Indian Nation (ME), Poarch Band of Creek Indians (AL), Saint Regis Mohawk Tribe (NY), Seminole Tribe of Florida (FL), Seneca Nation of Indians (NY), Shinnecock Indian Nation (NY), Tunica-Biloxi Tribe of Louisiana (LA), and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (MA).

of Policy and Legislative Affairs at 202-624-3550 or lmalerba@usetinc.org. We thank the Commission for the opportunity to share our perspective and look forward to a renewed "Quiet Crisis" report.

Sincerely,



Brian Patterson
President



Kitcki A. Carroll
Executive Director

CC: Ms. Angela French-Bell, Office of Civil Rights Evaluation
USET member Tribes
Wanda Janes, USET Deputy Director

Enclosure

"Because there is strength in Unity"