



November 16, 2020

Honorable Lisa Murkowski, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Tom Udall, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Betty McCollum, Chairwoman
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Honorable David Joyce, Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Interior, Environment,
and Related Agencies
House Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: FY2021 Funding for the Native American Business Incubators Program

Dear Chairwomen and Ranking Members:

The undersigned organizations – representing the interests of American Indian and Alaska Native tribal governments and business enterprises throughout the United States – express deep appreciation for the recent enactment the Native American Business Incubators Program Act of 2020 (S. 294), now Public Law 116-174.

We write to you as the conferees who will negotiate the final figures and conference report language for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2021 Appropriations for the Department of the Interior. Within the Indian Affairs budget for the “Community and Economic Development” account, we urge you to call for prompt implementation of the Native American Business Incubators Program within the Office of Indian Energy and Economic Development (OIEED) and provide the \$5,000,000 authorized to be appropriated for the program on an annual basis. The House Committee Report 116-448, on page 61, anticipated this initiative by stating: “The Office should explore opportunities to foster incubators of Tribal-owned and other Native American-owned businesses.” The Senate explanatory statement, just released with the draft Senate version of the FY 2021 Interior Appropriations bill, lacks any mention of this newly enacted program.

Given the importance of this long-awaited incubators program, we urge that you include full funding and explicit conference report language to jumpstart this incubator initiative, as requested in the last several Indian Country Budget Requests (see, e.g., the National Congress of American Indians FY2021 Indian Country Budget Request, p. 91). Clear language would help propel the OIEED, and the Department, to establish the program within FY2021 so that grant solicitations and awards can issue and more incubator services commence to enable Indian Country businesses to recover from the devastating impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.



AMERICAN INDIAN SCIENCE AND ENGINEERING SOCIETY

AIANTA
American Indian Alaska Native Tourism Association

Thank you for your prompt attention to our request and for your support to advance business and economic development in Indian Country.

Respectfully,

Chris James
President & CEO
National Center for American
Enterprise Development

Kevin J. Allis
Chief Executive Officer
National Congress of
American Indian

Joseph Valandra
Executive Director

Native American Contractors
Association

Dante Desiderio
Executive Director
Native American Finance
Officers Association

Sarah Echohawk
Chief Executive Officer
American Indian Science &
Engineering Society

Sherry L. Rupert
Chief Executive Officer
American Indian Alaska
Native Tourism Association

Jason Giles
Executive Director
National Indian Gaming
Association

Chief Kirk Francis
President
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund

Jackson Brossy
Executive Director
Native CDFI Network

John Echohawk
Executive Director
Native American Rights Fund

Amber Schulz-Oliver
Executive Director.
Affiliated Tribes of Northwest Indians
Economic Development Corporations