



USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

711 Stewarts Ferry Pike
Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37214
P: (615) 872-7900
F: (615) 872-7417
www.usetinc.org

December 17, 2020

For Immediate Release

Contact: Kitcki A. Carroll
Phone: (615) 467-1540
Cell: (615) 495-2814
kcarroll@usetinc.org
www.usetinc.org

USET SPF Celebrates Historic Nomination of Congresswoman Deb Haaland for Secretary of the Interior

Today, President-Elect Joe Biden announced his intent to nominate Congresswoman Deb Haaland, a citizen of the Pueblo of Laguna, for Secretary of the Interior. If confirmed, she will be the first Native person to lead the U.S. Department of the Interior and the first to hold a Cabinet-level position. The Department of the Interior is charged with the execution of critical parts of the trust obligation to Tribal Nations, historic preservation, and the management of a majority of federal lands. Each of its agencies has responsibilities to our governments and our people.

This is an historic moment for Indian Country and represents significant progress in the evolution of our nation-to-nation relationship with the United States. The nomination of Congresswoman Haaland sends a powerful message to Tribal Nations and Native people—one of regard, honor, affirmation, and visibility. For too long, Native experiences, perspective, understanding, and voices have been largely invisible or fundamentally misrepresented in public discourse. Too often, we are a forgotten people in our own homelands. For these reasons, and many others, the importance of this nomination cannot be overstated. As Secretary of the Interior, Congresswoman Haaland will ensure that Tribal Nations are represented at the highest levels of government, including through direct dialogue with the President and his Cabinet. In doing so, we are confident that her voice will serve to improve and strengthen our relationship with the United States.

“USET SPF has had the pleasure of working closely with Congresswoman Haaland on numerous initiatives during her service in the U.S. Congress,” said USET SPF President, Chief Kirk Francis. “Time and again, she has proven to be a passionate and committed advocate for Tribal Nations and the delivery of sacred trust obligations. We have no doubt that she will bring this same dedication to her role as Secretary. As a Native woman, she carries an innate understanding of our history, experiences, and challenges. This will allow her to serve in a manner that truly upholds, promotes, and advances Tribal sovereignty, self-governance, and self-determination. On behalf of the USET SPF family, we congratulate her on this historic nomination and extend our appreciation to President-Elect Biden for delivering upon his promise to appoint a Native person to a Cabinet that reflects the diversity of our country.”

Congresswoman Haaland’s unique, lived experiences and work with Tribal Nations will be critical in evolving the Department. She has both a full appreciation for our diplomatic relationship with the federal government, as well as an indigenous sensibility to the stewardship of our lands, environment, and cultural resources. This includes an appreciation for the Traditional Ecological Knowledge held by Tribal Nations. USET SPF is confident that her service will be transformative for the Department, for Indian Country, and for all Americans. We call upon the United States Senate to act swiftly to confirm her as Secretary in accordance with its responsibility to honor its obligations to Tribal Nations.

The USET Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is a non-profit, inter-Tribal organization advocating on behalf of thirty-three (33) federally recognized Tribal Nations from the Northeastern Woodlands to the Everglades and across the Gulf of Mexico. USET SPF is dedicated to promoting, protecting, and advancing the inherent sovereign rights and authorities of Tribal Nations and in assisting its membership in dealing effectively with public policy issues.

Because there is Strength in Unity