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## **USET SPF Alert**

### **Senate Votes to Confirm Congresswoman Debra Haaland to be First Native American Secretary of the Interior**

Dear USET SPF Membership,

Today, by a vote of 51-40, the U.S. Senate confirmed Congresswoman Debra Haaland to be the first Native American Secretary of the Interior and member of a Presidential Cabinet. In this role, she will oversee the Department of the Interior's (DOI) execution of critical parts of the trust obligation to Tribal Nations, historic preservation, and the management of a majority of federal lands. Each of DOI's agencies has responsibilities to our governments and our people, and Congresswoman Haaland will provide critical leadership and insight to improve the Department's operations and obligations to Indian Country.

In honor of this historic moment, USET SPF President, Kirk Francis, said, "The entire USET/USET SPF family applauds and celebrates Congresswoman Haaland's confirmation. Although it is long-past time that a Native American be at the helm of Interior, Congresswoman Haaland is uniquely suited and prepared to lead at this moment. We know that she will bring heart, humility, dedication, and the dreams of our collective ancestors with her as she seeks to honor sacred promises and redefine the relationship between Tribal Nations and the United States. We extend our most sincere congratulations and offer prayers for her success as she assumes this new role."

The choice and confirmation of Congresswoman Haaland as Secretary represents significant progress in the evolution of our nation-to-nation relationship with the United States. It 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 confirmation 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 looks forward to our continued close working relationship with Secretary Haaland. We will provide further updates on the Department of the Interior and the Biden-Harris Cabinet as they develop.