



# USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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## USET SPF Resolution No. 2023 SPF:007

### **SUPPORT FOR CODIFYING THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY'S OFFICE OF TRIBAL AND NATIVE AFFAIRS**

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of thirty-three (33) federally recognized Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET SPF Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribal Nation, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribal Nations' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the United States (U.S.) government and each federally recognized Tribal Nation have a government-to-government relationship grounded in numerous historical, political, legal, moral, and ethical considerations; and
- WHEREAS,** the U.S. Department of the Treasury (Treasury), as an agency of the U.S. Government, is required to uphold and fulfill the trust and treaty responsibilities and obligations to Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** for the majority of Treasury's existence, Tribal Nations have been denied a direct, permanent, internal avenue for communicating and consulting with the Secretary of the Treasury; and
- WHEREAS,** while Treasury has always had a role in issues that affect Tribal Nations, like tax and finance issues, this role has increased and expanded with time, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic and the disbursement of relief funds; and
- WHEREAS,** USET SPF has consistently called for the establishment of a Tribal Affairs Office at Treasury to facilitate the Department's execution of its trust and treaty obligations, and advise on the development of policy affecting Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** on September 29, 2021, a bipartisan group of US Senators, led by Senator Elizabeth Warren, sent a letter to the Department of the Treasury urging the establishment of an Office of Tribal Affairs in order to "improve Treasury's ability to fulfill its trust responsibilities to respect the nation-to-nation relationship between the federal government and Tribal Nations;" and,
- WHEREAS,** on November 23, 2021, a bipartisan group of House of Representatives members sent a letter to Congressional leadership urging the creation of an Office of Tribal Affairs within Treasury, stating that it is "imperative that the Department secure in-house expertise that is familiar with Indian Country and is whole dedicated to fulfilling the federal trust responsibility;" and

- WHEREAS,** in June 2022, Treasury announced the creation of a new Office of Tribal and Native Affairs with the intention of coordinating Tribal relations across the Department; and
- WHEREAS,** the establishment of the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs acknowledges the long-standing request from Tribal Nations to ensure that Tribal Nations are fully incorporated and consulted with throughout Treasury's policy development and implementation; and
- WHEREAS,** currently, the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs is operating without dedicated funding and at the discretion of the Secretary of Treasury; and
- WHEREAS,** On September 16, 2022, a coalition of Tribal Organizations, including USET SPF, the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI), the Native American Finance Officers Association (NAFOA), and others sent a letter to Congressional leadership urging permanent funding for the Treasury Office of Tribal and Native Affairs to "assist Treasury with fulfilling its trust responsibility and ensure that the full array of Treasury's programs will help support Tribally driven economic development and investment in Indian Country;" and
- WHEREAS,** in December 2010, the United States recognized the rights of its First Peoples through its support of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP), whose provisions and principles support and promote the purposes of this resolution; therefore, be it
- RESOLVED** USET SPF calls upon Congress and the Department of the Treasury to make the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs and its positions permanent within the Department, and be it further
- RESOLVED** USET SPF calls upon Congress and the Department of the Treasury to appropriate permanent funding to support the Office of Tribal and Native Affairs' operations, activities, staffing needs and programming.

### CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Impact Week Meeting held in Arlington, VA at which a quorum was present on February 7, 2023.



Chief Kirk E. Francis, Sr., President  
United South and Eastern Tribes  
Sovereignty Protection Fund



Vice Chairwoman Sarah Harris, Secretary  
United South and Eastern Tribes  
Sovereignty Protection Fund

*Because there is Strength in Unity*