



# USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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*Transmitted Electronically*

April 28, 2023

The Honorable Debra Haaland  
Secretary  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20240

Dear Secretary Haaland,

We write on behalf of United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) to express our support for the leaders of member Tribal Nations who have submitted applications to serve on the Department of Interior's (DOI) Secretary's Tribal Advisory Committee (STAC) as the Eastern Region Alternate. We continue to support the establishment of the STAC as an opportunity to elevate the voices of Tribal Nations to the highest levels of the Department and improve upon the execution of federal trust and treaty obligations.

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.<sup>1</sup> 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.

### **USET SPF Support for the Nominations of Tribal Leaders from Member Tribal Nations**

One of USET SPF's greatest strengths is that our 33-member Tribal Nations reflect the diversity found across all of Indian Country. In this respect, USET SPF itself is illustrative of the national diversity of Indian country. With this in mind, USET SPF fully supports the applications of the following Tribal leaders from within our membership. The selection of either of the below Tribal leaders for Eastern Region Alternate would serve to incorporate considerable diversity of experience to help the STAC reflect the unique circumstances and variations among Tribal Nations:

- Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais (Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah))
- Chairman Brian Weeden (Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe)

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<sup>1</sup> USET SPF member Tribal Nations include: Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas (TX), Catawba Indian Nation (SC), Cayuga Nation (NY), Chickahominy Indian Tribe (VA), Chickahominy Indian Tribe–Eastern Division (VA), 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), Mi'kmaq Nation (ME), Mississippi Band of Choctaw Indians (MS), Mohegan Tribe of Indians of Connecticut (CT), Monacan Indian Nation (VA), Nansemond Indian Nation (VA), Narragansett Indian Tribe (RI), Oneida Indian Nation (NY), Pamunkey Indian Tribe (VA), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Indian Township (ME), Passamaquoddy Tribe at Pleasant Point (ME), Penobscot Indian Nation (ME), Poarch Band of Creek Indians (AL), Rappahannock Tribe (VA), 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), Upper Mattaponi Indian Tribe (VA) and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (MA).

*Because there is Strength in Unity*

Each of these leaders is highly qualified. They are strong leaders with deep commitment to the promotion and advancement of Tribal sovereignty and self-determination. USET SPF knows that whichever of them may be selected by DOI to serve on the STAC, the other will remain engaged to work in collaboration to advance the views of our member Tribal Nations and Indian country as a whole.

### **Conclusion**

Again, USET SPF strongly supports the nominations of the above Tribal leaders, as well as the continued work of the STAC as an opportunity for DOI to further build upon its relationship with Tribal Nations and its implementation of Tribal guidance. We look forward to close collaboration with the STAC and DOI on positive change in our government-to-government, sovereign-to-sovereign relationship. This includes the enactment of policies that uphold our status as sovereign governments, our right to self-determination and self-governance, and honor the federal trust obligation in full. Should you have any questions or require additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Liz Malerba, USET SPF Director of Policy and Legislative Affairs, at (615) 838-5906 or by e-mail at [lmalerba@usetinc.org](mailto:lmalerba@usetinc.org).

Sincerely,



Chief Kirk E. Francis, Sr.  
President



Kitcki A. Carroll  
Executive Director