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Preserving Gains Made Under the Biden Administration Tribal Leader Talking Points White House Tribal Nations Summit 2023

Summary

Over the course of its tenure, the Biden Administration has initiated and expanded upon several important advancements in the U.S.-Tribal Nation diplomatic relationship. These advancements, in the form of federal positions, offices, and working groups contribute to the elevation of Tribal Nations in an unprecedented way. As the first term of the Biden Administration comes to a close, it must commit to preserving these gains.

Briefing & Talking Points

- **Funding and Permanency for OMB's Tribal Affairs Advisor.** With the appointment of OMB's first-ever Tribal Affairs advisor, we are seeing the voices and guidance of Tribal Nations raised to new heights within the Administration's priorities and its Budget Requests. We celebrate this achievement and attribute it, in large part, to OMB's commitment to meaningful dialogue with Indian Country. Now, as the Administration enters its final year, it is critical that this progress be preserved. We ask OMB to include dedicated funding and permanency for this position in the FY 2025 Request, so that Tribal Nations can continue to guide the agency in delivering upon trust and treaty obligations.
- **Funding and Permanency for Treasury's Office of Tribal and Native Affairs.** We would like to register our support for dedicated funding and permanency for Treasury's newly established Office of Tribal and Native Affairs. Tribal Nations have long advocated for the creation of an Office of Tribal Affairs within the Treasury to improve the Department's delivery of federal trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations. Providing dedicated funding will assist Treasury with fulfilling this directive and ensure that the full array of Treasury's programs will help support Tribally driven economic development and investment in Indian Country.
- **Funding for the White House Council on Native American Affairs.** Presently, and throughout its short history, the White House Council on Native American Affairs (WHCNAA) has operated with virtually no dedicated staffing or financial resources. Traditionally, the work of the Council has been coordinated by an executive director on detail from the Department of the Interior (DOI). And under the Executive Order establishing the Council, DOI "shall provide funding and administrative support for the Council to the extent permitted by law and within existing appropriations." In practice, this has resulted in a lack of substantive support for the work of the body and the executive director, along with a restricting of the WHCNAA's scope and ability to provide meaningful contact between the Cabinet and Indian Country.

Given the potential for WHCNAA to play a significant role in advancing the delivery of the federal government's delivery of trust and treaty obligations, as well as our diplomatic relationship, we urge this Administration to designate a dedicated funding stream for WHCNAA. It is our belief that this will allow the WHCNAA's work to be more substantive, productive, and meaningful for our evolving U.S.-Tribal Nation relationship.

Because there is Strength in Unity