



USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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USET SPF Resolution No. 2024:008

SUPPORT FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TRIBAL RESILIENCY CONTINUITY PROGRAM AT THE DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

- 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,** Congress has provided consistent funding to state and local governments for over 50 years to develop and sustain core homeland security and emergency services capabilities and capacities; and
- WHEREAS,** since 2003, Congress has allocated over \$55 billion in Homeland Security Grant Program funds to state and local governments, which averages \$3.2 billion per year, while Tribal Nations have only been allocated just over \$95 million (\$5.5 million per year average) in federal homeland security funding during the same period; and
- WHEREAS,** as a direct result of the federal government's ongoing investments, state and local governments were prepared and had the capacity to navigate the complex Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) processes and policies to access billions in emergency relief funds during the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- WHEREAS,** Tribal Nations and Tribal emergency management organizations have limited access to obtain emergency management and response funding directly from DHS, and current funding mechanisms require Tribal Nations and our emergency management organizations to seek funds through state governments; and
- WHEREAS,** the outbreak and continued persistence of the COVID-19 pandemic in Indian Country exemplified the failure of the federal government to uphold its trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations by failing to invest in all Tribal emergency services capabilities and capacity; and
- WHEREAS,** this failure to uphold trust and treaty obligations prevented over 80 percent of Tribal Nations from accessing billions in critical lifesaving, emergency relief funds throughout the COVID-19 pandemic; and
- WHEREAS,** the direct outcome of this chronic underfunding of Tribal emergency services programs left Tribal Leaders and government staff overworked, understaffed, and unable or challenged to navigate the complex FEMA process during a pandemic that threatened the public safety and operations of our Tribal Nations; and

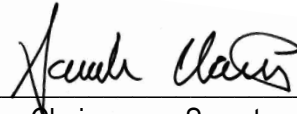
- WHEREAS,** unlike other units of government, Tribal Nations have been continuously left behind in securing Department of Homeland Security (DHS) funding to meet core homeland security and emergency services capabilities and capacities. As a result, the most logical approach toward funding a Tribal resiliency program will be to request funding through the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA); and
- WHEREAS,** the BIA Office of Emergency Management’s mission is to ensure Tribal communities, local and regional BIA offices, BIA leadership, and external emergency management responders work together to build, sustain, and improve the capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from, and mitigate all hazards; and
- WHEREAS,** in order to appropriately prepare Tribal Nations for future emergency and disaster response scenarios, Congress must uphold its trust and treaty obligations and fully fund BIA emergency management and response programs for Tribal Nations; and
- WHEREAS,** this will be a critical funding mechanism that will help ensure that Tribal Nations are able to meet the standards required by the Homeland Security Act (P.L. 107-296), the Robert T. Stafford Act (P.L. 100-707), as well as those standards developed by FEMA, the National Fire Administration, the Emergency Management Accreditation Program, the independent non-profit Joint Commission, the BIA Office of Emergency Management, and other public safety organizations; and
- WHEREAS,** Tribal emergency managers estimate that a minimum of 3 full-time equivalent positions would be required for each Tribal Nation to meet these standards and requirements and could be covered by receiving \$360,000 annually in addition to federal funding for Tribal Nations currently available; and
- WHEREAS,** on December 6, 2023, President Biden issued Executive Order 14112, “Reforming Federal Funding and Support for Tribal Nations to Better Embrace Our Trust Responsibilities and Promote the Next Era of Tribal Self-Determination”, which directs agencies to assess unmet financial obligations to Tribal Nations, reform federal programs in a way that facilitates greater autonomy over how Tribal Nations utilize federal funding, and make federal funding less burdensome and more accessible for Tribal Nations; 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** the USET SPF Board of Directors strongly urges Congress to appropriate, at a minimum, \$206.64 million to establish a Tribal Resiliency Continuity Program that is non-competitive, without a cost share, and streamlined at the Department of Interior to empower all Tribal Nations to build core emergency management, homeland security, and emergency services capacities and capabilities.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Impact Week Meeting held in Arlington, VA at which a quorum was present on March 29, 2024.



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



Vice Chairwoman Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund