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USET Applauds Congress' Passage of H.R. 3043, The Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act

September 18, 2014

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Washington, DC – Today, the Senate passed H.R. 3043, the Tribal General Welfare Exclusion Act, by unanimous consent after the House also passed the bill unanimously on September 16, 2014.

This critical legislation makes clear that general welfare benefits as defined by a tribal government and provided to its members will not be taxed. H.R. 3043 also requires Internal Revenue Service field agents to undergo training in federal Indian law and the government's legal treaty and trust responsibilities and creates a Tribal Advisory Committee to advise the Secretary of the Treasury on Indian tax policy issues.

Colley Billie, Chairman of the Miccosukee Tribe of Indians of Florida and United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc. (USET) Board member and Chair of USET's General Welfare Exclusion Task Force, stated, "This is an important day in Indian country. In April of 2011, the Miccosukee Tribe, with the support of several intertribal organizations, held the Native Nations Tribal Leader Tax Summit in Miami, Florida. Tribal leaders throughout the country were united in their support of this legislation. With Congress' passage of H.R. 3043, federal tax policy will finally be aligned with federal Indian law and the U.S. Constitution in a way that fully respects the sovereignty of tribal governments. As a proud member of USET, I want to thank the strong coalition of USET Tribal leaders, and the many Tribal leaders and Tribal advocates across Indian Country for their extraordinary effort and support of this historic piece of legislation; as well as Congress for passing this important legislation for Indian country, and we especially thank Rep. Devin Nunes and Senators Jerry Moran and Heidi Heitkamp for introducing this bill and working tirelessly to pass this legislation."

"It has been a long journey to get to this point, but Indian Country should celebrate and recognize how much we can achieve when we work together in a unified manner" said Chairman Colley Billie.

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"Because there is strength in Unity"