



United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

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USET Resolution No. 2015:004

REQUEST TO THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY TO PROVIDE OPERATOR TRAINING AND CERTIFICATION FUNDING TO TRIBAL ORGANIZATIONS WITH ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY APPROVED PROGRAMS

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-six (26) federally recognized Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** the actions taken by the USET Board of Directors officially represent the intentions of each member Tribe, as the Board of Directors comprises delegates from the member Tribes' leadership; and
- WHEREAS,** the need for safe and reliable drinking water and effective wastewater management is critical to the health, safety, welfare, economic viability, and self-determination goals of Tribal communities throughout Indian Country; and
- WHEREAS,** the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) set forth rules and regulations for the establishment and funding of state training and certification programs to ensure there are certified personnel operating water and wastewater facilities to provide safe drinking water and adequate sanitation services for all communities, including Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** under the federal Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act, to be eligible for Tribal Set-Aside Grant Program infrastructure funding, Tribes are required to have drinking water operators that are certified or licensed by a certifying entity that is approved by the EPA; and
- WHEREAS,** the EPA established the National Tribal Drinking Water Operator Certification Program (75 Fed. Reg. 48329, August 10, 2010), which sets forth guidelines under which Tribal operator certification programs can obtain formal approval by the EPA; and
- WHEREAS,** there are currently two Tribal organizations with EPA-approved drinking water operator certification programs (USET and Inter Tribal Council of Arizona) geared toward ensuring that Tribal operators have the skill and knowledge to safely operate Tribal water and wastewater facilities within their own Tribal communities; and
- WHEREAS,** state certification programs are not geared to meet the unique jurisdictional, legal, and cultural frameworks that apply to Tribal water and wastewater systems in Indian Country which forces Tribal operators to use state certification programs, thereby adding yet another significant barrier to Tribes' ability to realize self-determination; and
- WHEREAS,** unlike state operator training and certification programs that receive substantial funding from the EPA and federal government, sustained and continued funding for Tribal operator training and certification programs is gravely threatened by budget cuts and a lack of understanding by the federal government and its agencies of the critical role that ongoing training and Tribal

certification plays in the operational continuity and sustained success of Tribal water systems across the 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 the USET Board of Directors hereby requests that the Environmental Protection Agency utilize current funding for training and technical assistance to provide funding for approved Tribal organizations for training and certifying Tribal operators; and, be it further

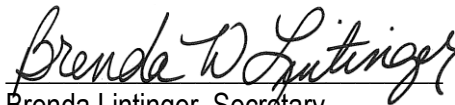
RESOLVED the USET Board of Directors makes this request with the understanding that no previously designated Tribal program funding will be used for this purpose.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Verona, NY on Thursday, December 4, 2014.



Brian Patterson, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.



Brenda Lintinger, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.

“Because there is strength in Unity”