



USET

SOVEREIGNTY PROTECTION FUND

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USET SPF Resolution No. 2018 SPF:021

SUPPORT FOR TRIBAL TRANSPORTATION UNITY CAUCUS (TTUC) DISCUSSION DRAFT BILL “JOHN P. SMITH TRIBAL ROAD SAFETY AND TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE ACT OF 2018”

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund (USET SPF) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-seven (27) 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,** transportation infrastructure on Tribal homelands and in Alaska Native villages is inadequate and unsafe; and
- WHEREAS,** according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) infants are eight times more likely to die in a vehicle-related crash than non-Native infants, and motor vehicle crashes are the leading cause of unintentional injury for Native American adults; and
- WHEREAS,** the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) has reported that in three out of four deaths in motor vehicle crashes on reservations, the individuals were not wearing seat belts; and
- WHEREAS,** federal appropriations for the Tribal Transportation Program (TTP), Tribal Transit Program, Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Indian Highway Safety Program, TTP Safety Fund Grant program, and BIA Road Maintenance Program are wholly inadequate to address the documented unmet Tribal transportation infrastructure, transit, and highway safety obligations; and
- WHEREAS,** these unmet obligations perpetuate Indian Country transportation infrastructure deficiencies, undermine the efforts of Tribal governments to address continuing disparities between the general population and Native communities, including access to higher education, public safety, health services and economic opportunity, and limit the ability of Tribal governments, as “*public authorities*,” to meaningfully collaborate with federal, state, and other local governments regarding transportation infrastructure, transit, and roadway safety needs; and
- WHEREAS,** many of the Fixing America’s Surface Transportation (FAST) Act’s discretionary and competitive grant programs, such as the Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery (TIGER) grant program and Nationally Significant Freight and Highway Projects program, do not have Tribal set-asides to ensure that Tribal nations can favorably compete, and contain burdensome local match and other application requirements, such as cost-benefit analysis studies, that severely limit the benefits of such federal programs to Indian Country; and

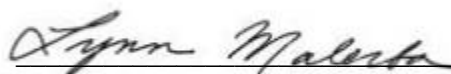
- WHEREAS,** Congress has long recognized that roads promote economic development and help Tribal Nations to provide vital governmental services, which are essential for healthy, vibrant, and stable Tribal communities; and
- WHEREAS,** the Tribal Transportation Unity Caucus (TTUC), a coalition of Tribal Nations, Alaska Native villages, and Tribal advocates, in anticipation of the Administration and Congress introducing a multi-year infrastructure plan during the 115th Congress, have prepared a discussion draft bill, the “John P. Smith Tribal Road Safety and Transportation Infrastructure Investment Act of 2018,” that expands federal transportation programs serving Tribal Nations, reduces burdensome regulations, improves BIA recordkeeping relating to rights-of-way, provides innovative financing tools for Tribal Nations and seeks increased federal appropriations for Tribal transportation infrastructure, transit, and safety obligations; and
- WHEREAS,** to address the disparities in infrastructure, equipment, and resources that exist between the Tribal nations and state and local governments, Tribal Nations, as *public authorities*, must advocate before Congress and the Administration for direct federal investment in transportation and transit programs required to meet the needs of our Tribal citizens consistent with the federal government’s trust responsibility to all 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 extends its support for the Tribal Transportation Unity Caucus’s discussion draft bill, the “John P. Smith Tribal Road Safety and Transportation Infrastructure Investment Act of 2018,” and urges Congress and the Administration to include its provisions in a national infrastructure measure to establish greater parity between Tribal Nations and other units of government so that Tribal Nations can address the ongoing unmet transportation, transit, and highway safety requirements of our citizens.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET SPF Impact Week Meeting, at which a quorum was present, in Arlington, VA, February 8, 2018.



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



Chief Lynn Malerba, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes
Sovereignty Protection Fund

Because there is Strength in Unity