



UNITED SOUTH AND EASTERN TRIBES, INC.

USET Resolution No. 2004:034

SUPPORT OF THE SOVEREIGN RIGHT TO SELF-DETERMINATION FOR THE ALASKAN TRIBES AND VILLAGES

- WHEREAS,** United South and Eastern Tribes, Incorporated (USET) is an intertribal organization comprised of twenty-four (24) 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 Alaska Legislature has for several years engaged in litigation against the Department of the Interior and Alaska Tribes to terminate the federally recognized tribal status of Alaska Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** in the wake of recent defeats the Alaska Legislature's attorney in 2003 filed two new lawsuits against the Department of the Interior seeking a court order declaring the current federal recognition of Alaska Tribes to be illegal; and
- WHEREAS,** the Alaska Legislature's efforts have been actively supported by Alaska Senator Ted Stevens, who has directly urged Department of Interior Secretary Norton to reverse the Department's recognition of Alaska Tribes; and
- WHEREAS,** pending the outcome of this litigation, Senator Stevens has commenced a new campaign to defund Alaska Native Tribes, including proposing (1) a rider in the FY2004 Justice Department appropriation taking away tribal court and COPS funding from Alaska Tribes and transferring those funds to the State of Alaska, and (2) a rider to the Veteran's Administration/Department of Housing and Urban Development (VA/HUD) Appropriation taking away from Alaska Native Tribes housing funds presently administered by these Tribes under Native American and Housing Assistance Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA); and
- WHEREAS,** the effect of these and similar measures will be to slowly cut off the ability of the Alaska Tribes to function by denying them the ability to provide for the health, safety and welfare of their communities; and
- WHEREAS,** Senator Stevens, in remarks to the press made October 2, 2003 made clear that his opposition to Alaskan tribes is not about funding or efficiency issues, but about terminating altogether the sovereignty of Alaska tribes, stating the following:
- The road they're on now is the road to the destruction of statehood because the Native population's increasing at a much – much greater rate than the non-Native population. I don't know if you realize that. And they want to have total jurisdiction over anything that happened in a village without regard to State law and without regard to federal law; and
- WHEREAS,** other members of Congress, have to date not taken a position on these matters, including the riders being advanced in the FY2004 appropriations process; therefore, be it

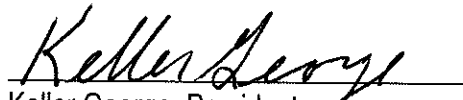
“Because there is strength in Unity”

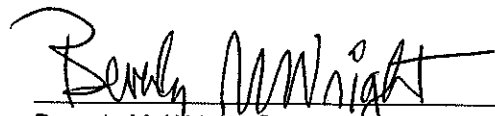
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RESOLVED that the USET Board of Directors (1) hereby condemn as discriminatory, and contrary to America's policy of tribal self-determination, all riders intended to take funding away from Alaska Tribes, (2) calls upon all members of Congress to actively oppose such rider that they are removed from all FY2004 appropriations bills and/or continuing resolutions prior to their final enactment, and (3) calls upon the Department of the Interior and the Department of Justice not to waiver from their past defense of the federally recognized tribal status of Alaska Native Tribes.

CERTIFICATION

This resolution was duly passed at the USET Annual Meeting & EXPO, at which a quorum was present, in Mashantucket, CT, on Thursday, October 23, 2003.


Keller George, President
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc.


Beverly M. Wright, Secretary
United South and Eastern Tribes, Inc

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Chairman

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DENNIS R. REHBERG, MT
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TOM COLE, OK
STEVAN PEARCE, NM
ROB BISHOP, UT
DEVIN NUNES, CA
RANDY NEUGEBAUER, TX



U.S. House of Representatives
Committee on Resources
Washington, DC 20515

December 1, 2003

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FILE

NICK J. RAHALL II, WV
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JAMES H. ZOIA
Democratic Staff Director

STEVEN J. DING
Chief of Staff

Mr. James T. Martin
Executive Director
United South and Eastern Tribes
711 Stewarts Ferry Pike, Suite 100
Nashville, TN 37214

Dear Mr. Martin:

Thank you for forwarding a copy of the resolution regarding the support for the sovereign right of self-determination for Alaskan tribes and villages, which was adopted at the annual meeting of USET. I appreciate hearing from you.

Except for funding conditions placed in appropriations bills, there is no free-standing legislation pending before the Resources Committee that directly concerns the tribal status of Alaska Native villages. It appears the dispute described in USET's resolution is occurring within the State of Alaska and may be resolved by the courts. Regardless, I appreciate your bringing USET's position to my attention and will carefully analyze your tribes' views should this matter be addressed in Congress.

Again, thank you for writing. Please continue to keep me informed of issues concerning the tribal members of USET.

Sincerely,

Richard W. Pombo
Chairman

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