



August 1, 2017

Honorable John Hoeven
Chairman
Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Honorable Tom Udall
Vice Chairman
Committee on Indian Affairs
838 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Chairman Hoeven and Vice-Chairman Udall:

Thank you for your focus this year on tribal housing issues. Chairman Hoeven's introduction of S. 1275, the BUILD Act, along with your joint introduction of S. 1333, the Tribal HUD-VASH Act, with the Veterans Affairs Committee leadership shows your commitment to improving tribal housing programs and opportunities in Indian Country.

As a follow-up to our testimony at the June 12, 2017 Legislative Hearing regarding the two housing bills, NAIHC wants to re-iterate its support for initiatives providing housing opportunities for Native American and Alaska Native veterans. The Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration has been successful at a number of locations, while also showcasing difficulties in implementation in other tribal communities. We believe S. 1333 would address many of these issues exposed by the Tribal HUD-VASH demonstration, while also opening up the program to all tribes.

We support S. 1333 and urge you to report the bill out of Committee and encourage you both, along with the bill cosponsors Senator Isakson and Senator Tester, to work with your colleagues to secure passage of S. 1333 in the Senate and the full Congress.

With respect to S. 1275, NAIHC would support reporting the bill out of Committee, so long as there is a commitment to both address our concerns with Section 5 of the bill and to address the reauthorization of Title VIII. Section 5 of the bill would open up training and technical assistance funding to "training and technical assistance providers" without any requirement or limitation that the providers have tribal background or expertise. The existing training and

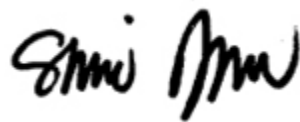
technical assistance language found in Section 703 of NAHASDA was a result of the original negotiation of NAHASDA by tribal leaders to ensure such assistance was being provided by an entity dedicated to and with expertise in tribal housing issues. As currently drafted, NAIHC cannot support Section 5 of S. 1275 as it could result in funds (that would otherwise go directly to tribes through the Indian Housing Block Grant) going to organizations with no tribal background or expertise. Our recommendation remains to leave the current language of Section 703 untouched.

Additionally, as we stated at the hearing, NAIHC supports the reauthorization of the Native Hawaiian provisions in Title VIII along with many other provisions that could improve tribal housing programs. NAIHC remains concerned that no effort or legislation has been drafted to address these issues as requested in our letter to the Committee in January of this year.

So long as there remains a commitment to address these issues, which we believe was expressed by many of the Committee members at the June 12 hearing, we would support the Committee reporting out S. 1275 after the August recess in order to give the effort to reauthorize NAHASDA ample time to be successful.

Thank you for your consideration and your continued support of tribal housing programs. If you have any questions, please contact me or staff in NAIHC's DC office at (202) 789-1754.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sami Jo Difuntorum". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Sami" being more prominent than the last name "Difuntorum".

Sami Jo Difuntorum
Chairwoman

CC: Senator Tester
Senator Isakson