

December 12, 2024

Democratic Caucus
1420 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Democratic Caucus Members:

We write in strong support of Congressman Jared Huffman for Ranking Member of the U.S. House of Representatives Natural Resources Committee. Since taking office in January 2013, Congressman Huffman has been an effective advocate for Native people across the country. His leadership on key issues facing our communities—from natural resource management to social justice—demonstrates his unwavering commitment to addressing the needs and inequities in Indian Country. We believe his continued leadership in this role will further advance these priorities.

As the Congressman representing the most tribes in the Lower 48 states, Congressman Huffman is a tireless advocate for meaningful changes that directly benefit Native communities. His advocacy for tribal nations spans a wide range of issues, from energy and water to education, broadband, health, and cultural resource protection. He has been the leader in advocating for restoring critical protections to the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge—home to Indigenous Peoples who depend upon the unique ecosystem. He has also been at the forefront of efforts to right historic wrongs, such as returning sacred lands to tribes and spearheading initiatives, including urging the Government Accountability Office to analyze the impacts of Public Law 280 on law enforcement and the Missing and Murdered Indigenous People crisis in Indian Country. Through these efforts, he has worked to ensure federal accountability for the safety, justice, and protection of Native people and sacred resources.

Congressman Huffman has a proven record of fighting to protect and restore California's native fish populations for over 30 years. One of his most significant achievements is ensuring the completion of the Klamath River dam removal project—the largest salmon restoration effort in the United States, which is of paramount importance to tribes in the region. His work in the California State Legislature, including leading the historic Human Right to Water Law, ushered in a new era of water reliability and ecosystem restoration, benefiting the environment and tribal and disadvantaged communities.

Congressman Huffman's actions stretch beyond natural resources issues. He led the bipartisan appropriations request for the Native American Housing Assistance and Self-Determination Act (NAHASDA), securing \$1.3 billion for the Indian Housing Block Grant in FY24—more than \$300 million above the previous record and significantly exceeding both the White House and Senate-passed levels. Congressman Huffman has consistently pushed the Indian Health Service to fulfill its obligation to tribal communities, including personally lobbying Secretary Becerra to visit with tribes to address urgent health needs and reforms. He has worked tirelessly to expand broadband access in rural and tribal areas, championing his New Deal Rural Broadband Act, supporting the \$3 billion Tribal Broadband Connectivity Program in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), and negotiating provisions in the bipartisan public lands package.

For all these reasons and more, we believe that Congressman Huffman will continue to ensure that tribes are at the forefront of addressing our nation's natural resources and social justice challenges as the Ranking Member of the House Natural Resources Committee.

Sincerely,

Chairman Steven Orihuela, Bishop Paiute Tribe

Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe of California

Chief Brian Harris, Catawba Nation

Cher-Ae Heights Indian Community of the Trinidad Rancheria

Colorado River Indian Tribes

Cloverdale Rancheria of Pomo Indians of California

Dry Creek Rancheria, Band of Pomo Indians

Elk Valley Rancheria, California

Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria

Forest County Potawatomi Community, Chairman James Crawford

Jamul Indian Village of California

Karuk Tribe

Chairwoman Debra Ramirez, Little River Band of Pomo

Lytton Rancheria, Chairperson Andy Mejia

Manchester Band of Pomo Indians, Chairwoman Tisha Jones

Manzanita Band of Mission Indians

Mashantucket Pequot Tribal Nation

Charles Martin, Chairman of the Morongo Band of Mission Indians

Nottawaseppi Huron Band of the Potawatomi

Chairman Tehassi Hill, Oneida Nation

Paskenta Band of Nomlaki Indians

Penobscot Nation

Pit River Tribe

Tolowa Dee-ni' Nation

Yuhaaviatam of San Manuel Nation

Yurok Tribe

Kenneth Kahn, Chairman Santa Ynez Chumash Indians

President Martin Harvier, Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community

Wena Supernaw, Quapaw Nation Business Committee Chair

Louise Davis, Pit River Health Services Vice Chair

Heidi Moore-Guynup, Director of Tribal and Government Affairs, Blue Lake Rancheria