



Intertribal Agriculture Council
100 N. 27th Street, Suite 500, Billings, MT 59101

February 19, 2021

The Honorable Joe Manchin
Chairman
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable John Barrasso
Ranking Member
U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and
Natural Resources
307 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

RE: IAC Support for the Swift Confirmation of Representative Deb Haaland to Serve as the 54th Secretary of the Department of the Interior

Dear Chairman Manchin and Ranking Member Barrasso:

On behalf of the Intertribal Agriculture Council and its Native Farm Bill Coalition membership, I write in support of the confirmation of Representative Deb Haaland as Secretary of the Department of the Interior. The IAC represents all 574 federally recognized Tribal Nations and the interests of over 80,000 producers in Indian Country. Our 80,000 producers operate on over 59 million acres of land and generate over \$3.5 billion a year—an overwhelming majority of this activity occurs on Tribal and individual trust land that falls under purview of the Department of the Interior. Having a Native American woman, who knows the plight of Indian Country's food producers, leading the Department will ensure that its policies and programs are responsive to the specific needs of our Tribal producers and Tribal governments. We strongly urge the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources to swiftly confirm the nomination of Rep. Haaland to serve as the next Secretary of the Interior.

Since our inception in 1987, the challenge of meaningfully elevating Indian Country's agriculture needs beyond the chronically understaffed and underfunded Bureau of Indian Affairs to engage the entire Department in helping to address the issues of Indian Country has always included an insurmountable amount of education to our federal partners at Interior to understand Tribal agriculture. Rep. Haaland—a citizen of the Pueblo of Laguna, a 35th-generation New Mexican, one of the first Native women to serve in the U.S. House of Representatives, and from a family of farmers and ranchers—is perfectly suited to lead the Department of the Interior.

Throughout its entire history and today, the decisions and policies made by the leadership of the Department impact the lives and livelihoods of American Indian and Alaska Natives across the entire country. While the entire federal government shares the federal trust and treaty responsibilities, DOI is looked at as the federal government's lead. In its over 170 year history, a Native American has never served as Secretary of the Interior to lead the federal government's engagement and responsibilities to Tribal governments and Tribal citizens. Having a strong Native voice in the President's cabinet with Rep. Haaland's experience and qualifications will ensure that the entire federal government is accountable to Indian Country. And we are

IAC Ltr - Support for Haaland DOI Secretary Confirmation
February 19, 2021

confident in Rep. Haaland's ability to serve the diverse needs both inside and outside of Indian Country.

In conclusion, the IAC asks you to confirm Rep. Haaland as the next Secretary of Interior. She has extensive experience, exemplary qualifications, and a demonstrated commitment to public service. Rep. Haaland's record demonstrates that she will continue to bring pragmatism to the performance of her responsibilities as Secretary. As a Native woman, Rep. Haaland descends from people who have hunted, farmed, managed, and cared for our nation's lands since time immemorial. She understands deeply that these landscapes are multipurpose and integral to sustaining many communities, economies, and cultures.

It is our honor to support Rep. Haaland in this historic role, we ask that you swiftly confirm Rep. Haaland as the next Secretary of Interior.

Sincerely,



Kari Jo Lawrence
Executive Director
Intertribal Agriculture Council
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