

Northern Arapaho Business Council

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April 4, 2014

The Hon. Michael B. Enzi
United States Senate
379A Russell Senate Bld.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. John Barrasso
United States Senate
307 Dirksen Office Bld.
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Hon. Cynthia Lummis
U.S. House of Representatives
113 Cannon House Office Bld.
Washington, D.C. 20515

Re: Proposed Legislation Redefining Wind River Indian Reservation Boundaries

Dear Senators Enzi and Barrasso and Representative Lummis:

We received a copy of the draft bill a few days ago. You have asked us to comment on the proposed legislation no later than April 4. It is clear to us that you are moving forward as quickly as possible at the request of Governor Mead and regardless of any input from the Tribe. Your failure to engage in meaningful consultation on a matter of such vital importance to the future of the Tribe is disheartening.

The draft bill would terminate the reservation status of certain lands within the Wind River Indian Reservation. Obviously, we have grave concerns about the bill and oppose it.

The bill you have put forward resurrects policies discredited and abandoned long ago by the United States. Since its adoption and promotion by President Nixon in 1970, the policy of the United States has been to support tribal sovereignty and self-determination. The federal government embraced these policies after more than a century of wrong-headed approaches, including the Termination and Assimilation policies of the 1950's, where the government sought to force Native Americans into the proverbial melting pot or wipe us off the map. These policies oppressed millions of Native Americans and ultimately failed. In modern times, Congress favors an approach that allows Tribes to self-govern, chart our own course, deal with state and federal authorities on a government-to-government basis, exercise sovereignty, and be secure in our homelands.

We strongly suspect that people who support this bill have not taken the time to read the DOI and EPA decisions, study the law, or appreciate the history. The notion that someone would skip this exercise and go straight to promoting legislation to reverse the longstanding federal view embodied in the decision is, to us, quite frightening. We have asked our attorneys to provide you with follow up information on this point which Senator Enzi and Representative Lummis requested during our meetings last week.

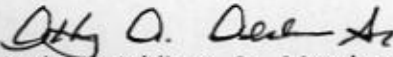
As we mentioned in those meetings, Wyoming has promoted the Treatment As a State process as an appropriate forum to resolve the competing views of the Wind River Indian Reservation boundary. When you consider what the State has said to the federal courts, you should be able to appreciate that recent outrage about the EPA decision is little more than political theater.

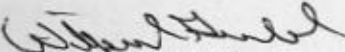
This bill is a direct assault on our sovereignty and what little remains of our homeland. Its passage would reflect poorly on the State of Wyoming. Those who promote it will find themselves on the wrong side of history.

For these reasons, we ask you to reconsider your support for the bill.

Sincerely,


Darrell O'Neal, Sr., Chairman


Anthony Addison, Sr., Member


Willard Gould, Member


Ronald K. Oldman, Co-Chairman

Dean Goggles, Member


David McElroy, Sr., Member