



**COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES**

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Crow Nation • Eastern Shoshone Tribe  
Fort Belknap Indian Community • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nation • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe  
Oglala Sioux Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe • Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe  
Shoshone Bannock Tribes • Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Walker River Paiute Tribe

**Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT)**

**Resolution: 10-19-2022 Resolution # 01-2022 (WR-Las Vegas)**

**Resolution in Support of Greater Tribal Inclusion in the Farm Bill**

**WHEREAS**, the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) was formally established in early April 2011, and is comprised of Tribes with large land base, including the Blackfeet Tribe of Montana • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Crow Nation • Eastern Shoshone Tribe • Fort Belknap Indian Community • Mandan, Hidatsa & Arikara Nations • Navajo Nation • Northern Arapaho Tribe • Oglala Sioux Tribe • Rosebud Sioux Tribe • Sisseton Wahpeton Sioux Tribe • Shoshone Bannock Tribes • Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe, • Walker River Paiute Tribe, and is Chaired by President Kevin Killer, Oglala Sioux Tribe; and

**WHEREAS**, COLT was organized to provide a unified advocacy base on all issues affecting Tribes that govern large trust land bases and that strive to ensure the most beneficial use of those lands for tribes and individual Indian landowners; and

**WHEREAS**, COLT seeks to educate the United States Congress, the Executive Administration, the public, and other tribes regarding the unique issues impacting tribes that govern large land bases; and

**WHEREAS**, COLT further advocates for legislative, regulatory, and policy reforms that impact large land base tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, the U.S. Congress is considering legislation that commonly known as the “Farm Bill,” an omnibus, multiyear law that governs an array of agricultural and food programs. It provides an opportunity for policymakers to comprehensively and periodically address agricultural and food issues. In addition to developing and enacting farm legislation, Congress is involved in overseeing its implementation. The farm bill typically is renewed about every five years. Since the 1930s, Congress has enacted 18 farm bills. Farm bills traditionally have focused on farm commodity program support for a handful of staple commodities— corn, soybeans, wheat, cotton, rice, peanuts, dairy, and sugar. Farm bills have become increasingly expansive in nature since 1973, when a nutrition title was first included. Other prominent additions since then include horticulture and bioenergy titles and expansion of conservation, research, and rural development titles. Without reauthorization, some farm bill programs would expire, such as the nutrition assistance and farm commodity support programs. Other programs have permanent



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authority and do not need reauthorization (e.g., crop insurance) and are included in a farm bill to make policy changes or achieve budgetary goals. The farm bill extends authorizations of discretionary programs. Yet, historically, these farm bills have left out tribes; and

**WHEREAS**, historically, USDA’s programs have been overly focused on revenue-generating agricultural, as opposed to tribes’ agricultural motivations most often focused on food, nutrition, and job stability for tribal members and sovereignty; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States continues to ignore Treaty and Trust obligations for Buy Indian preference and tribal hiring preference. Even the land-dispossession-motivated and assimilationist Act of February 28, 1877 (whereby Congress officially annexed Sioux lands) included Indian hiring and purchasing preferences because they are and always have been, good policy:

Whenever the said Indians shall be located upon lands which are suitable for cultivation, rations shall be issued only to the persons and families of those persons who labor, (the aged, sick, and infirm excepted;) and as an incentive to industrious habits the Commissioner of Indian Affairs may provide that such persons be furnished in payment for their labor such other necessary articles as are requisite for civilized life. The Government will aid said Indians as far as possible in finding a market for their surplus productions, and in finding employment, and will purchase such surplus, as far as may be required, for supplying food to those Indians, parties to this agreement, who are unable to sustain themselves; and will also employ Indians, so far as practicable, in the performance of Government work upon their reservation.

**WHEREAS**, the market has responded to USDA’s over-emphasis on revenue-generation agricultural and programs such as the Highly Fractionated Indian Land Program and the Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Program have failed. To COLT’s collective knowledge, no tribe or individual Indian has ever used either program. This is because these programs tie to the high and variable federal interest rate and include onerous collateral requirements. These programs’ use and location limitations further discourage tribes and Native farmers and ranchers from using them.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) calls on COLT’s Congressional Delegations to advocate for much greater tribal inclusion in the next Farm Bill. COLT supports the recommendations of the Native Farm Bill Coalition, found in *Gaining Ground: A Report on the 2018 Farm Successes for Indian Country and Opportunities for 2023* ([8b3589\\_763e8879ac2842c0baa45c586ddfd83a.pdf \(nativefarmbill.com\)](https://www.nativefarmbill.com/8b3589_763e8879ac2842c0baa45c586ddfd83a.pdf)), with emphasis on the following:



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1. Application of the Buy Indian Act for all federal food-related purchases on Indian reservations or for Native communities.
  - a. Billions of dollars annually go to school lunch programs, WIC, elderly food security programs, food stamps, and commodities programs on and near reservations . But not \$1 of those billions has attached Indian preference. This statutory expansion would direct billions of dollars into tribal communities and support tribes' self-determination.
2. Indian preference hiring for all USDA jobs on or near Indian reservations or serving Native communities.
  - a. There is a USDA office in every county in the United States, including Rural Development, FSA and NRCS offices. Hundreds of jobs are in these offices, but there is no Indian preference, even on reservations. Consequently, there are few, if any, Natives serving in USDA roles on reservations.
  - b. COLT calls on OMB to support this statutory expansion.
3. Full contracting authority under the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, Pub. L. 93-638 for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (FDPIR).
4. Full contracting authority under the 1975 Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act, Pub. L. 93-638 for all U.S. Forest Service functions on or near Indian reservations.
5. Amend USDA's Fractionated Indian Land Program and the Indian Tribal Land Acquisition Program to make them:
  - a. Grants or fixed low-interest loans (1%) with no collateral requirements available to tribes and Native individuals.
    - i. Native agriculture projects routinely cannot "pencil-out" under USDA's burdensome requirements. When there is no commercial motivation for the activity, but rather food and nutrition, repayment of a loan is impracticable.
  - b. Allowable for conservation use
    - i. Again, motivations are in issue in current program disinterest. Tribes might want to acquire land for bison management or to secure subsistence animal migration routes -- having nothing to do with revenue generation and having no attendant potential revenues as collateral.
  - c. Allowable for off-reservation acquisitions.
    - i. There is no good policy reason to limit these programs to on-reservation acquisitions. Tribes have much broader traditional



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territories and Treaty boundaries that often contain preferable agricultural lands.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that COLT calls upon COLT's Congressional Delegations to direct USDA to implement much better and broader inclusion of indigenous plants and animals in USDA programs so that tribes do not have to identify every program where resources might be useful and argue for policy expansion of that program (e.g., presuming bison are eligible under any USDA program).

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, COLT calls upon USDA to review its regulations and programs for barriers to tribal access and to take steps to eliminate such barriers.

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, COLT calls upon the Congressional Delegations and USDA to authorize the provision of technical assistance to tribes by tribal entities with such expertise in lieu of USDA. Our experience has been that USDA's culture is resistant to change and the top-down goals of the Administration bear little fruit in regional and local offices. It would be preferable for tribal entities to be able to provide much better customer service that USDA does, especially as to FSIS, FSA and RMA programs.

**BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that this resolution shall be the policy of COLT until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

This resolution was enacted at a duly called meeting of the Coalition of Large Tribes held in Las Vegas, Nevada within the home state of the Walker River Paiute Tribe on October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022 at which a quorum was present, with the resolution approved unanimously.

Dated this October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2022

Nathan Small, Secretary, Coalition of Large Tribes

Kevin Killer, Chairman, Coalition of Large Tribes