



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

September 22, 2023

Hon. Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs
Department of the Interior 1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4660-MIB
Washington, DC 20240

Reference: Request for Priority Attention to COLT Member Tribes

Dear Assistant Secretary Newland:

I am writing to you today on behalf of the Coalition of Large Tribes (COLT) in follow up to my September 17, 2023 letter to you regarding recent events that may trigger a federal government shutdown and disproportionately impact our member tribes. As you know, we are an intertribal organization representing the interests of the more than 50 tribes with reservations of 100,000 acres or more. As treaty tribes that are guaranteed direct federal services to our tribal nations and citizens.

COLT would like to express its gratitude for you making yourself available to meet with the elected leaders of COLT yesterday in Washington, DC. We also appreciate our meeting with DAS - Management Jason Freihage to discuss contract support costs for both fiscal year 2022 and fiscal year 2023. This issue is very important to COLT member tribes, especially in light of the impending and likely shutdown of the federal government.

In our meetings, COLT Treasurer and Rosebud Sioux Tribe Councilwoman Lisa White Pipe requested immediate action by AS-IA and BIA leadership to do all within their control to move all relevant contract support cost funds, direct and indirect, to COLT member tribes for both fiscal year 2022 and 2023. COLT member tribes need all of these funds from the region as soon as possible in order for tribal governments to continue funding essential government personnel for as many tribal programs as possible during these uncertain times. Based on our conversations, we believe that your office understands and will make its best efforts to meet our urgent request, including but not limited to detailing awarding officials from other Regions to expedite delivery in our Regions which have been chronically understaffed with trained awarding officials.

We ask that you utilize all of your available authority to make this happen as quickly as possible. And we request that you provide any and all available BIA



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awarding officials to COLT member regions to prioritize meeting treaty and trust obligations of the federal government to tribal nations.

Additionally, we appreciate DAS Freihage's clarification that our member tribes' contract support costs that are not delivered before the end of the fiscal year are not lost to us, but rather would be available after some routine fiscal year-end federal accounting transfers. There has been some confusion on this in the Regions and we are grateful to DAS Freihage for putting our minds at ease about that.

Finally, COLT requests that Secretary Haaland take any action within her authority that might allow more time for awarding officials to push as much money out to tribes before the fiscal year-end so that our member tribes can be as prepared as possible for a potentially extended government shutdown that might otherwise greatly imperil public health and safety in our already overburdened communities.

COLT is grateful for your leadership and sense of urgency to help our communities. Thank you in advance for doing all within your authority to meet these urgent requests of COLT member tribes.

Respectfully,

Marvin Weatherwax, Chairman, Coalition of Large Tribes
Member, Blackfeet Tribal Business Council