



COALITION OF LARGE TRIBES

Blackfeet Nation • Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe • Confederated Tribes of the Warm Springs Indian Reservation
Crow Nation • Duck Valley Indian Reservation 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 • Shoshone-Paiute Tribes of the Duck Valley Indian Reservation
Spokane Tribe • Ute Indian Tribe • Walker River Paiute

Hon. Marvin Weatherwax, The Blackfeet Nation and Coalition of Large Tribes

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues

Twenty-Third Session

Item 5(g)

Thematic dialogues, including on the financing of Indigenous Peoples' work and participation in the context of, inter alia, development, climate, environment and biodiversity

April 17, 2024

Greetings. My name is Marvin Weatherwax. I serve on the Blackfeet Tribal Business Council and the Blackfoot Confederacy Tribal Council.

I serve as Chairman of the Coalition of Large Tribes, representing more than 50 tribes with reservations of 100,000 acres or more, governing more than 95% of Indian Country and serving approximately one million Native American citizens.

Thank you for the opportunity to address financing for Indigenous development. In the United States, that must start with the federal government honoring Treaty promises to fund public safety, healthcare and education.



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The federal government perpetuates the public safety crisis on U.S. Indian reservations, which threatens our economic and social development, culture, environment, education, health and human rights. The crises of Missing and Murdered Indigenous People and fentanyl cartels are at a fever pitch, and yet the current Administration proposes to fund Indian Country public safety at about 10% of need. Despite their own report stating we need over \$3 billion annually and 26,000 more officers just to get to the same baseline as other U.S. rural populations, we won't get more than \$670 million because that is where the President's budget starts. It is a terrible hamster wheel of injustice. It is impossible to attract outside investment and talent, such as physicians, when our reservations are unsafe, our housing stock is dilapidated and insufficient, and we lack water and wastewater systems due to similar chronic underfunding.

We also need our federal government to incentivize banks to provide better access to credit to tribes, broadly. Currently, many tribal citizens face significant discrimination in the U.S. banking system. Our tribal governments often face egregious terms and high borrowing rates. Large tribes often cannot take advantage of complicated and time-consuming federal grant programs.



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COLT is working on a significant buffalo and ecosystem restoration effort that would play a huge role in biodiversity more broadly. We have been collaborating philanthropic organizations to acquire land that will facilitate enhanced tribal buffalo restoration efforts for tribes that have limited land resources. This includes providing technical assistance to Tribes on herd health and management, cultural harvest efforts, reintroduction of buffalo to address diet-related diseases, and traditional cultural practices.

Funding that work is difficult and competitive. Being able to directly access a dedicated fund for environmental work and traditional healing would be incredible—as those priority items are almost totally unfunded by the U.S. government.

Thank you.