



February 5, 2024

Honorable Mike Johnson, Speaker

Honorable Hakeem Jeffries, Minority Leader

Honorable Roger Williams, Chair  
Committee on Small Business

Honorable Nydia Velázquez, Ranking Member  
Committee on Small Business

Honorable Tom Cole, Chair  
Committee on Rules

Honorable Jim McGovern, Ranking Member  
Committee on Rules

House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

**Re: Support for Authorizing the Small Business Administration Office of Native American Affairs (H.R. 7102)**

Dear Speaker, Minority Leader, Committee Chairs and Ranking Members:

The 18 undersigned organizations – representing the interests of Indian Tribes, Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian governing organizations, their business enterprises, and business owned by their community members throughout the United States – write in strong support of the bipartisan Native American Entrepreneurial Opportunity Act (H.R. 7102) introduced by Representatives Sharice Davids (D-KS) and Eli Crane (R-AZ) and received unanimous committee approval last week. The bill formally authorizes and elevates the Office of Native American Affairs (ONAA) of the Small Business Administration (SBA), directed by an Assistant Administrator reporting directly to the SBA Administrator. Similar legislation (S. 1156) awaits Senate passage. Urgent need for Native small business relief and support calls for a fortified ONAA to coordinate with all SBA components and deploy assistance from all SBA programs to catalyze the growth, success, and self-sufficiency of Native communities’ businesses and economic development. **We urge prompt full House approval of this important measure.**

This bill properly affords the ONAA the stature and authority it has long needed to work effectively on Indian Country’s behalf and coordinate with other offices within SBA and key Cabinet-level Departments to direct federal resources in more targeted ways to Indian Tribes, Alaska Native corporations, Alaskan and Native Hawaiian communities, and Native small businesses across the country. Charged to direct SBA’s Native American Outreach activities, the ONAA would formulate and promote policies, programs, and assistance that better address the entrepreneurial, capital access, business development, and contracting needs of Tribes and Native businesses. The ONAA also could provide financial and other assistance directly to: (1) deploy training, counseling, and other educational outreach, workshops, and supplier events; (2) facilitate Native contractors’ participation in the SBA’s various small business contracting programs; (3) facilitate and improve access to SBA’s various loan programs, loan guarantees, disaster assistance, and other capital access programs; and (4) ensure the conducting of Tribal Consultations to solicit input and facilitate discussion of potential modifications to SBA programs and procedures.

Congress must act quickly on this important new legislation to elevate and enhance SBA’s ONAA, just as Congress has authorized other such high-level Offices within the Departments of the Interior, Commerce, Energy, Agriculture, Justice, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development. Elevating and empowering the SBA ONAA will ensure

that intended assistance will be effectively delivered to Indian Country's businesses and entrepreneurs in the years to come.

We thank you and look forward to working with you to advance this legislation to enactment this Congress.

Respectfully,



Chris James  
President & CEO  
National Center for American  
Indian Enterprise Development



Larry Wright, Jr.  
Executive Director  
National Congress of American  
Indians



Quinton Carroll  
Executive Director  
Native American Contractors  
Association



Susan Masten  
Interim Executive Director  
Native American Finance Officers  
Association



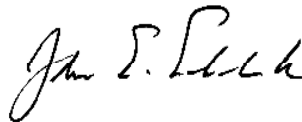
Pete Upton  
Chief Executive Officer  
Native CDFI Network



Amber Schulz-Oliver  
Executive Director  
Affiliated Tribes of Northwest  
Indians



Jason Giles  
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Indian Gaming Association



John Echohawk  
Executive Director  
Native American Rights Fund



A. Gay Kingman  
Executive Director  
Great Plains Tribal Chairmen's  
Association



Sherry L. Rupert  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Indian and Alaska Native  
Tourism Association



Sarah EchoHawk  
Chief Executive Officer  
American Indian Science and  
Engineering Society (AISES)



Kirk Francis  
President  
United South and Eastern Tribes  
Sovereignty Protection Fund



Lori Pourier  
President  
First Peoples Fund



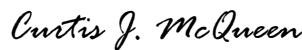
Kim Reitmeier  
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Cariann Ah Loo  
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Native Hawaiian Organizations  
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Cole W. Miller  
Kari Jo Lawrence  
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Native Farm Bill Coalition



Curtis J. McQueen  
Executive Director  
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Kari Jo Lawrence  
Chief Executive Officer  
Intertribal Agriculture Council