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The Tulalip Tribes are federally recognized successors in interest to the Snohomish, Snoqualmie, Skykomish, and other allied tribes and bands signatory to the Treaty of Point Elliott.

March 14, 2025

Committee on Natural Resources
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
1324 Longworth House Office Building

Dear Chairman Hurd:

Please find the answers below to the questions for the record the Committee sent me following the February 25, 2025, oversight hearing on *“Federal Indian Trust Asset Management: Progress Made But Improvement Needed.”*

1. As the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITARA) was enacted in 2016, the included demonstration project is set to expire in 2026. Should the demonstration program be reauthorized, if yes, please explain why.

Answer: Yes. ITARA streamlines the process of Indian trust resource management, strengthening Tribal sovereignty and furthering Tribal self-determination by giving Tribes greater control over their trust assets, specifically, the Tulalip Tidelands. The protection and management of the Reservation tidelands by the Tribes is both necessary and indispensable to protect and preserve the use of the homeland for our treaty fishing rights. Fish and shellfish resources are of vital importance to the economy, culture, subsistence, and identity of the Tulalip people. The right to harvest these resources is secured for the exclusive use of the Tribes under the Treaty of Point Elliott as confirmed in *U.S. v. Washington*. The tidelands provide essential habitat and food for these Tribal resources *and protection* of these tidelands is essential to preserve, benefiting future generations of the Tulalip people. The ITARA demonstration would streamline and support the Tulalip Tribes management of its tidelands.

2. As discussed during the hearing, the Bureau of Indian Affairs/Department of the Interior have provided a narrow scope for what trust assets may be included in the demonstration program. How would you address this concern?

a. Would you be willing to work with my committee staff on language that would clarify this if reauthorization were pursued?

Answer: Yes. The Tulalip Tribes stands ready to assist and can provide suggested language to reinforce the intent of the ITARA demonstration program.

3. Stakeholders have argued that the demonstration program was not properly advertised throughout the country. What should the DOI be required to do for advertising the program if it is reauthorized? a. Please detail how Tulalip initially heard about the demonstration program.

Answer: The Department of the Interior should list the consultation on website at www.bia.gov which has a drop-down option that lists all upcoming consultations. This was created after this law was created. Also, a Dear Tribal Leader letter should be sent with multiple consultation dates.

4. Please expand on the challenges the Tulalip Tribe encountered when applying to participate in the demonstration program? a. How can Congress better address these issues?

Answer: In 2017, the Tulalip Tribes had several meetings with the Department discussing the tidelands and at their request we provided information regarding the location of the tidelands, ongoing asset and resource management on the tidelands, and surface lease information of the Tidelands. Ultimately, we were told in unambiguous terms that the ITARA demonstration project was limited to forestry resources and surface leases. The law however does not limit what “trust assets” are subject to the plan and there is no language in the bill that would support a limited or narrow reading of the scope of trust resources. Tulalip renewed its efforts to enter into an ITAMP in 2023, this time with a new Administration but again, was not successful.

5. Your written statement highlighted the Treaty of Point Elliot affirmed under U.S. v. Washington, which provided that the Tulalip people have the right to harvest fish and shellfish resources found on their reservation tidelands. What challenges have you personally seen on your tidelands over the years?

Answer: There has certainly been a loss of access to the shoreline, so we are prevented from fishing on higher tides. Also, the tidelands are being blocked by bulkheads, marinas, parking lots, public buildings, houses, cabins, docks, bulkheads, and beach access stairways, causing loss of ground fish and crab. And we have lost our ability to fish in our traditional fishing areas because of the installation of unpermitted mooring buoys on our reservation tidelands

Please let me know if you have any additional questions.

/s/ Glen G. Gobin

Glen Gobin
Tulalip Tribal Council

Cc: Lisa Koop Gunn, Tulalip Attorney and Federal Advocate
Ryan Miller, Director of Government Affairs