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Wednesday, September 24, 2025

The Honorable Jeff Hurd
Chair
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
House Committee on Natural Resources
1328 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515.

The Honorable Teresa Leger Fernández
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Indian and Insular Affairs
House Committee on Natural Resources
1328 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

RE: H.R. 681 “To amend the Act of August 9, 1955 (commonly known as the “Long-Term Leasing Act”), to authorize leases of up to 99 years for land held in trust for the Mashpee Wampanoag Tribe and the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah), and for other purposes.

Dear Chair Hurd, Ranking Member Leger Fernández, and Members of the Subcommittee:

On behalf of the Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah) (“Tribe”) I write to provide the following responses to your additional questions.

1. *Question: Would you be supportive of a larger Long-Term Leasing amendment in which all federally recognized tribal nations, if they choose, could enter into lease agreements for up to 99 years?*

Yes. All federally recognized Tribal Nations should be treated equally, and a broader long-term leasing amendment would be a powerful step in that direction.

2. *Question: Considering that number over the course of five years, in your opinion, are tribes across this country broadly interested in pursuing economic development opportunities that would benefit from a longer-term leasing authority?*

Yes — Tribes across the country are very interested in pursuing economic development opportunities that benefit from longer-term leasing authority. Longer-term leasing provides certainty for investors, developers, and lenders, which in turn expands the range of projects Tribes can realistically pursue. Whether the focus is housing, renewable energy, commercial development,

or cultural/tourism enterprises, having the ability to enter into leases beyond short horizons allows us to plan more strategically, capture greater value, and exercise our sovereignty in ways that build long-term community wealth.

In fact, Tribes have consistently emphasized that short lease terms have been a barrier to attracting outside capital and creating sustainable projects. Extending lease authority aligns with broader federal Indian policy that supports self-determination and Tribal self-governance, because it allows Tribes to shape development on our own lands in ways that reflect our individual cultural priorities, community needs, and long-term economic vision.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide these comments and look forward to working with you. Please feel free to contact me with any questions at chairwoman@wampanoagtribe-nsn.gov.

In Balance, Harmony and Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Cheryl Andrews-Maltais". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chairwoman Cheryl Andrews-Maltais
The Wampanoag Tribe of Gay Head (Aquinnah)