



# Intertribal Timber Council

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November 18, 2025

The Honorable Bruce Westerman  
Chairman  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1324 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Jared Huffman  
Ranking Member  
House Committee on Natural Resources  
1332 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Westerman and Congressman Huffman:

On behalf of the Intertribal Timber Council (ITC), I am writing to express our support for H.R.5515, Indian Trust Asset Reform Amendment Act.

The ITC has long worked with this Committee on improvement of tribal management of their own natural resources. A decade ago, the ITC supported the Indian Trust Asset Reform Act (ITAR)-- particularly the Demonstration Project of Title II. The intent was to allow tribes greater control in the management of their natural resources to benefit their own communities. Tribes participating in the program have experienced budget and timeline efficiency, increased revenue streams and greater autonomy in resource management decisions.

Unfortunately, implementation was slower than anticipated and tribal participation lower than expected. In February of this year, the ITC testified before the Subcommittee on Indian & Insular Affairs about the need to improve ITARA and make the program more accessible for tribes who choose to participate. We have also seen tribes denied this demonstration opportunity for trust resources outside forests and surface leases.

Key provisions of H.R.5515 include:

- Permanent authority: the bill would amend ITARA to make the demonstration project permanent;
- Updated Definitions: Revises the definition of "Indian tribe" to align with the Federally Recognized Indian Tribe List Act and adds a definition for "tribal organization," allowing such organizations to participate in trust asset management on behalf of tribes, provided they obtain tribal approval and comply with submission requirements;
- Indian Trust Asset Management Project: Requires the Secretary of the Interior to continue the project, enabling tribes or authorized tribal organizations to submit management plans supported by tribal resolutions;

- Management Plans: Streamlines plan requirements by removing certain elements, allows for amendments to approved plans (reviewed under existing criteria), and ensures tribes with approved plans remain eligible for federal funding without disqualification;
- Trust Asset Management Authority: Broadens tribal discretion to manage assets without further Secretary approval, including surface leasing, adopting or amending forest management plans, and other activities, as long as they align with the approved plan.
- Trust Asset definition: Broadens the definition of Trust Asset to include “(B) any resource that is, or has previously been, included in an integrated resources management plan or other management plan approved by the Secretary.”;

This legislation reflects comments made by the ITC during the legislative process and we support its passage by Congress. If enacted the ITC stands ready to assist tribes and the Bureau of Indian Affairs to improve tribal and agency understanding of the program, as we have done for other congressional authorities such as the Tribal Forest Protection Act.

The ITC appreciates the Committee’s consideration of H.R.5515 and your interest in improving the management of Indian trust assets, especially our forest resources.

Sincerely,



Cody Desautel  
President