



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT
OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20503

THE DIRECTOR

November 25, 2009

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Senator Murkowski:

Thank you for your recent letter to the President regarding the Departments of the Interior and Health and Human Services and specifically, funding related to tribal self-determination. I have been asked to respond on his behalf. I appreciate your views and the time you took to share them; they are especially timely as we work diligently on the President's Fiscal Year 2011 Budget.

As you know, the FY 2010 Budget proposed substantial increases in discretionary budget authority for various programs benefiting American Indians and Alaska Natives, including tribal contract support costs (CSC). Congress appropriated \$166 million for the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and \$399 million for the Indian Health Service (IHS) to cover CSC in FY 2010.

The President supports tribal self-determination and self-government. BIA and IHS have formal processes in place to receive input from tribal leaders in developing budgetary priorities, and tribal leaders have stated during these consultations that CSC are a priority. Working on the FY 2011 Budget, we are particularly mindful of this commitment to tribal self-determination – and are reminded by your correspondence of its importance.

The country faces significant challenges, both in terms of its short-term economic health and its long-term fiscal future. We must make the tough choices necessary to restore fiscal discipline and build a new foundation for economic growth. As we make those tough choices, your concerns are of particular importance.

I look forward to working with you in the weeks and months ahead. Thank you again for your letter.

Sincerely,

Peter R. Orszag
Director

Identical Letter Sent to:

The Honorable Lisa Murkowski

The Honorable Mark Begich

The Honorable Daniel Inouye

The Honorable Tom Udall

The Honorable Max Baucus

The Honorable Jon Tester

The Honorable Tim Johnson

The Honorable Maria Cantwell

The Honorable Patty Murray

The Honorable Jeff Merkley