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Dear Tribal Leader:

On November 20, 1969, a core of fourteen students from the San Francisco Bay Area seized and occupied Alcatraz Island for nineteen months. The "Occupation" was an unexpected consequence of the Bureau of Indian Affairs Relocation Policy that sent thousands of young Native people throughout Indian country into the cities to assimilate into western mainstream. It was through these young that they initiated a call to action to address treaty violations and demand a change in US government policies towards Native Americans. "The Occupation" was a driving factor that helped change the "Termination Era" into the era of "Self-Determination."

During the Occupation, the students organized with numerous Native people who came to the island to support this action and they called themselves Indians of All Tribes (IOAT). They developed a plan to establish Thunderbird University with an emphasis for a Native Cultural Education Center and Museum. The Bay Area Native American Council (BANAC) was further organized to support IOAT and consisted of all the urban organizations in the bay area. The Occupation ended after 19 months on Alcatraz but the call for Tribal Self-Determination began and was formally established through enactment of the Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act of 1975. .

It has been over fifty years to get two critically important Indigenous representatives in Washington that can directly assist with IOAT's vision for Alcatraz: Deb Haaland, as the Secretary of the Interior and Chuck Sams, as the Director of the National Park Service. Pursuant to these historic appointments, IOAT determined that it was time to become officially incorporated as a 501(c)3 organization. On May 6, 2021, IOAT resubmitted a proposal to the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service to develop a museum and cultural center on Alcatraz. We are further seeking to establish a Tribal Leaders Council to support IOAT and to ensure Tribal issues, histories and cultures are represented on Alcatraz. We are hoping that tribal representation will impress the need for action to the National Park Service.

The proposed cultural center will serve to educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, supporters, and friends about the history, culture, and development of Indian tribes

throughout the Americas from Alaska to South America. It is our desire to also establish a scholarship fund to support Native students obtain their professional degrees.

Alcatraz attracts visitors from every part of the world. However, little is known about the Occupation. We are now officially a 501(c)3 non-profit organization and we feel the proposed cultural center will not only allow us the opportunity to educate others about our tribal histories, culture and people, but about the natural world we live in which supports the ecology and knowledge of our planet. There are many ways we can be of help to Tribal Nations, including educating the thousands of people that visit Alcatraz annually on Tribal sovereignty, self-determination, and other issues, and it will also give our Indigenous people a place for gathering for ceremonies, pow-wows, workshops, lectures, and symposiums.

We know that you are very busy representing your people in all facets of life, so we are asking you to join us by sending a resolution of support for our cultural center and museum. In turn, we will include your representation and any information you desire about your tribe, cultural histories and issues to the present day on Alcatraz. Your inclusion into our circle of Indians of All Tribes will be monumental. Thank you for your consideration to be a part of our leadership council.

Respectfully,

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