

JAMES P. MORAN
8TH DISTRICT OF VIRGINIA

COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS
SUBCOMMITTEES:
INTERIOR, RANKING MEMBER
DEFENSE
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
2252 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-4608
(202) 225-4376
FAX: (202) 225-0017

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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DISTRICT OFFICE:
333 N. FAIRFAX STREET
SUITE 201
ALEXANDRIA, VA 22314
(703) 871-4700
FAX: (703) 922-9436

June 9, 2014

OFFICE OF THE
EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
www.moran.house.gov

The Honorable Kevin Washburn
Assistant Secretary – Indian Affairs
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Assistant Secretary Washburn:

I wish to express my support for the proposed regulation issued on May 22nd that would reform the administrative acknowledgement process for federally recognized Native American tribes.

In course of my efforts to secure federal recognition to eight Virginia state-recognized tribes, I have become well acquainted with the shortcomings of the present acknowledgement process. The current acknowledgement process is extremely burdensome, expensive and too slow. When Virginia's tribes first met with Interior Department officials to discuss the acknowledgement process, they were informed by senior administration officials that it would not occur within their lifetime. Indeed the process for those tribes that that have the time and resources

I am writing to you in strong support of the Catawba Indian Nation's application to take land into trust within the Tribe's Federal service area in King's Mountain, North Carolina, approximately 32 miles from its current reservation.

Over the years, I have had a number of occasions to meet with the Catawba leadership and learn the story of this fabled tribe, who at the Battle of King's Mountain helped turn the tide of the American Revolution in the South in favor of the American colonists. The Catawbas have been faithful allies of the United States, and yet their lands and rights have been eroded by a combination of federal and state action. It is a familiar story in the long and tragic history of federal Indian policy, but with a twist – the tribe's rights were further undermined by Congress during my service here through passage of the Catawba Indian Land Claims Settlement Act of 1993.

In 1993, Congress passed legislation that restored the tribe's federal recognition and made big promises with regard to the tribe's right to a significant reservation; in return, the tribe relinquished all of its land claims in both North Carolina and South Carolina. At one time, the Catawba's controlled millions of acres of land in these two states. In 1943, the United States agreed to take into trust for the tribe a reservation of 3,434 acres, but during the Termination Era that reservation was disestablished. However, through the Settlement Act, the tribe had the right to a 3,000-acre reservation

(plus up to another 1,200 acres under certain circumstances), essentially restoring the reservation they had lost through termination. Two decades later, the tribe's reservation is a mere 1,006 acres, with the State of South Carolina working to block the Catawba Tribe at every turn.

Our Nation owes the Catawbas a great debt of gratitude—a debt that we have not come close to repaying. In the interests of justice and the honor of the United States, I would urge that Interior fulfill the intent and promise of the Settlement Act by moving forward positively and expeditiously on the Catawba's trust application, so that finally the Catawba Indian Nation may have hope of a brighter future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jim Moran". The signature is stylized and fluid, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right. Below the signature, the name "James P. Moran" is printed in a standard serif font.

James P. Moran