



THE EPISCOPAL DIOCESE OF VIRGINIA

October 22, 2024

THE RIGHT REVEREND E. MARK STEVENSON, BISHOP

Mr. Bryan Newland
Assistant Secretary - Indian Affairs
Department of Interior
1849 C Street, N.W. MS-4660-MIB
Washington, DC 20240

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**DOI/OS/AS-IA/OFA
Washington, DC**

Dear Mr. Newland:

I am writing to express my strong support for the Mattaponi Indian Tribe's petition for federal acknowledgment, which they plan to submit within the next 30 days. As one of only two recognized Tribes in Virginia with reserved lands established through colonial treaties, the Mattaponi holds a unique and significant place in our nation's history. Unfortunately, they remain the only reservation Tribe in the Commonwealth without federal acknowledgment.

Over the past several years, the Tribe has worked diligently to compile a thoroughly documented petition, demonstrating their rich history and longstanding relationship with the United States. This commitment to transparency and documentation reflects the Tribe's deep respect for their heritage and their determination to uphold the treaties that have shaped their existence for over 346 years, beginning with the 1646 Articles of Peace and continuing through the 1677 Treaty of Middle Plantation.

The Mattaponi Indian Tribe is governed by a Chief and Council, with Chief Mark T. "Falling Star" Custalow currently leading the Tribe. Under his guidance, the Tribe has maintained its cultural traditions and strengthened its community ties, all while navigating the complex landscape of federal recognition.

My relationship with the Mattaponi has been profoundly enriching, particularly through initiatives like the Pocahontas Project, which aims to honor and preserve the Tribe's cultural legacy. I have witnessed firsthand the Tribe's resilience and dedication to their people and heritage.

I urge you to give full consideration to their petition for federal acknowledgment. The recognition of the Mattaponi Indian Tribe is not only a matter of justice but also an essential step in honoring the treaties that have been in place for centuries.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Should you require any further information or if you would like me to provide additional context, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

The Rt. Rev. E. Mark Stevenson
Bishop of Virginia

LOVE JESUS. EMBODY JUSTICE. BE DISCIPLES.

