

## INSERT TRIBAL LETTER HEAD

March 7, 2019

Dear **[insert member name – Direct to your Representative, Senator, members on Senate Agriculture, and/or Senate Committee on Indian Affairs]**:

On behalf of the **[insert name of Tribe, governing body, or relevant organization]**, **[we/I]** request that you advocate to your colleagues on the **[House/Senate Appropriations Committee]** to add an additional FY 2020 appropriation of \$5 million, if not more, for the Food Distribution Program on Indian Reservations (“FDPIR”) 638 Pilot Program that was authorized in Section 4003(b) of the 2018 Farm Bill (Pub. L. 115-334).

FDPIR serves low-income Native American and Alaska Native households, and the elderly, from approximately 276 Tribes that do not have easy access to nutritious food on or near Indian Reservations. Despite efforts by USDA to meet the dietary needs of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, FDPIR food packages often do not include traditional, culturally appropriate, and locally grown foods produced by Native farmers, ranchers, and producers. This not only hinders the ability of Tribal governments to promote the dietary well-being of its citizens, but it also prevents Tribal governments from stimulating tribal food economies that are needed to overcome food scarcity in Indian Country.

To ensure FDPIR meets the needs of Native Americans and Alaska Natives, the 2018 Farm Bill included a provision to establish the FDPIR 638 Pilot Program. This provision was first introduced by Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Chairman John Hoeven (R-ND) and Vice Chairman Tom Udall (D-NM) in [S. 2804](#), Cultivating Resources, Opportunity, Prosperity, and Sustainability (“CROPS”) for Indian Country Act. The Pilot Program allows Tribal governments to take the driver’s seat in the procurement of food for FDPIR food packages to ensure that their citizens have increased access to nutritious, traditionally grown and harvested food resources that advances healthy lifestyles, Tribal cultures and customs, and Tribal economies in the most cost-effective manner possible.

Funding this pilot program would allow the **[Insert number]** FDPIR participants in the **[Name of your FDPIR Program]** gain access to traditional foods, such as **[insert foods of importance to your communities dietary health]**, and support our **[examples of tribal farmers, producers, or farmers in the region or potential partnerships with nearby Tribes and their growers]**.

For more than four decades, Tribal governments have utilized the 638 authority (Indian Self-Determination Act, Pub. L. 93-638) to administer programs funded annually by the Departments of the Interior and Health and Human Services and similar authority to the Departments of Labor, Transportation, and Housing and Urban Development with great success. **[We are/I am]** are confident that funding this pilot program will provide similar results. For this reason, **[We are/I am]** urgently ask you to fully fund the FDPIR 638 Pilot Program and encourage your colleagues to join you in supporting the self-determination and self-governance aspirations of Tribal governments.

Please feel free to call me or our counsel **[insert contact information]** at your earliest convenience to discuss. Thank you for all you and your staff do for Indian Country.

Sincerely,

**[Insert Signature, Name, Position/Department, and Tribe]**