Hopland Band of Pomo Indians

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July 30, 2012

The Honorable Senators Joseph Lieberman and Susan Collins
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: **Support for HR 2903, to Amend the Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act for Comprehensive and Consistent National Disaster Emergency Management including Tribal Governments**

Dear Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins,

I write on behalf of the Hopland Band of Pomo Indians to ask that you support HR 2903. The House bill amends the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to provide a federally-recognized Indian tribe authority to submit direct requests to the President of the United States for a federal or disaster declaration. Currently, tribal governments must navigate this process through the governor of their respective states. Respectfully, this process binds a tribal government's ability to act swiftly during emergencies and is not consistent with the government-to-government trust relationship between the United States and Indian Country.

The Hopland Band of Pomo Indians is a federally recognized tribe located in a rural area Southeast of Mendocino County, California. Our tribe's land base consists of close to 2,080 acres of fee and trust land amongst oak covered coastal foothills. We have about 840 enrolled Tribal members, 285 of whom live on the tribe's reservation. Our tribal territory's size, location, population, and limited transportation infrastructure, present unique challenges when responding to emergencies and major disasters.

The Hopland Band of Pomo Indians already coordinates responses to emergencies and major disasters through our own emergency management infrastructure; however, we are ready to partner with the federal government independent of state governments.

HR 2903 will provide tribal governments equal access to the public safety decision-making power when requesting a federal emergency disaster declaration. The Hopland Band of Pomo Indians has been working with FEMA and the National Congress of American

Shawn Padi	Pamela Espinoza	Leonard R. Powell	Suzanne T. Romero	Loretta Harjo	Joseph San Diego	VACANT
Tribal Chair	Vice Chair	Secretary	Treasurer	Council Member	Council Member	Council Member

Indians to develop this bill which will provide tribal governments equal access to much-needed public safety decision-making power when catastrophic disasters impact tribal communities.

Thank you for your time and consideration in strengthening tribal self- governance and protecting all citizens of this country, and for support for passage of HR 2903.

Sincerely,

Shawn Padi, Chair
Hopland Band of Pomo Indians