



INTER-TRIBAL COUNCIL OF NEVADA, INC.

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July 11, 2012

BATTLE MOUNTAIN
BAND COUNCIL
CARSON COLONY
COMMUNITY COUNCIL
DRESSERVILLE
COMMUNITY COUNCIL
DUCK VALLEY
SHOSHONE-PAIUTE
BUSINESS COUNCIL
DUCKWATER
SHOSHONE
TRIBAL COUNCIL
ELKO BAND
COUNCIL
ELY SHOSHONE
COUNCIL
FALLON BUSINESS
COUNCIL
FT. McDERMITT
PAIUTE-SHOSHONE
TRIBES
GOSHUTE BAND
COUNCIL
LAS VEGAS PAIUTE
TRIBAL COUNCIL
LOVELOCK TRIBAL
COUNCIL
MOAPA BUSINESS
COUNCIL
PYRAMID LAKE
TRIBAL COUNCIL
RENO/SPARKS
TRIBAL COUNCIL
SOUTH FORK
BAND COUNCIL
STEWART
COMMUNITY COUNCIL
SUMMIT LAKE
PAIUTE COUNCIL
TE-MOAK TRIBAL
COUNCIL
TIMBISHA SHOSHONE
TRIBE
WALKER RIVER
PAIUTE TRIBAL
COUNCIL
WASHOE TRIBAL
COUNCIL
WELLS BAND
COUNCIL
WINNEMUCCA
COLONY COUNCIL
WOODFORDS
COMMUNITY
COUNCIL
YERINGTON PAIUTE
TRIBAL COUNCIL
YOMBA TRIBAL
COUNCIL

Honorable Joseph Lieberman
Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs
706 Hart Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

RE: ***H.R. 1953 to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and
Emergency Assistance Act***

Dear Senator Lieberman,

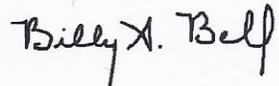
The Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada expresses support for HR 1953 and asks that the Senate Committee on Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs approve this bill. HR 1953 affirms tribal sovereignty and the unique trust obligation of the United States of America. H.R. 1953 will amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act to include procedures for requests from Indian tribes for a major disaster or emergency declaration.

It is critical that governments, including tribal governments, be able to (i) respond quickly and decisively to a disaster or an imminent emergency. It is imperative that Indian tribes, to whom the federal government owes a unique trust responsibility, be able to directly request a declaration by the President that a major disaster or emergency exists for the tribe. To date, tribes must wait on a state governor, who owes no unique trust obligation to the tribe, to request a Presidential declaration. If H.R.1953 is approved, the Chief Executive of an affected Indian tribe may directly request a Presidential Declaration of Emergency.

In addition to addressing the declaration issue, H.R.1953 will improve tribal access to direct assistance from FEMA. Under existing law, Indian tribes may elect to receive disaster and emergency funds directly from FEMA as a grantee or through a state as a sub-grantee. However, if a tribe receives such funds through a state, the tribe must generally enter into a pass-through agreement with the state, which will often request a waiver of the tribe's sovereign immunity. This puts Indian tribes in a very difficult position, especially during an emergency or disaster, and it can impede critical assistance during the crisis. H.R. 1953 will allow tribes to exercise their sovereign right of self governance on tribal lands.

The Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada formally supports and requests that the 112th Congress approves H.R. 1953 to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act as presented.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Billy A. Bell". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "B" and a distinct "A" and "Bell".

Billy A. Bell
President, Inter-Tribal Council of Nevada