



Government Relations & Strategic Partnerships  
431 18<sup>th</sup> Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20006

August 7, 2012

The Honorable Joseph Lieberman  
Chairman  
Senate Committee on Homeland Security  
& Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

The Honorable Susan Collins  
Ranking Member  
Senate Committee on Homeland Security &  
Governmental Affairs  
340 Dirksen Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairman Lieberman and Ranking Member Collins:

On behalf of the American Red Cross and our more than 600 community based chapters, I am writing in support of S. 2283, a bill to amend the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (Stafford Act) to include procedures for requests from Indian tribes for a major disaster or emergency declaration, and for other purposes, as introduced in the U.S. Senate. This measure would amend the Stafford Act in recognition of tribal sovereignty.

At this time, the Stafford Act classifies Indian tribes as "local governments" which creates a direct obstacle to Indian tribal governments' ability to request emergency or major disaster declarations directly from the President. Currently, tribes may only obtain Federal disaster assistance if the governor of their state requests a Stafford Act declaration from the President.

We join with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) and intertribal organizations including the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) in support of legislative efforts that would authorize federally recognized tribal governments to make requests directly to the President for Stafford Act declarations.

As a result of our partnership experiences with FEMA and Indian tribal governments, we believe recognizing sovereignty and providing direct access to Federal disaster assistance will aid in disaster preparedness and response efforts in these communities.

We would appreciate your support of S. 2283 to amend the Stafford Act in recognition of tribal sovereignty.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Neal Denton".

Neal Denton  
Senior Vice-President  
Government Relations and Strategic Partnerships