



Narragansett Indian Tribe

1-401-364-1100 1-800-287-4225

Fax (401) 364-1104

TDD - 711

Chief Sachem's Office

Secretary of the Interior Deb Haaland
1600 Pennsylvania NW
Washington DC 20500

June 26, 2023

Dear Madam Secretary,

On behalf of the Narragansett Indian Tribe, I would like to take this opportunity to express our extreme gratitude to you for taking the time to come and visit our ancestral homelands, and for hearing our primary issues and concerns.

As was stated during our meeting, the Narragansett Indian Tribe has now been recognized for forty years; celebrating our 40th year of Federal Recognition as of April 11, 1983. During this time our tribal membership roles have expanded from our base enrollment of 1,188 enrolled members to over 3,500 members. The Tribe's annual budget from our combined 115 grants and contracts is less than eight (8) million. This is not enough to adequately service the tribal community. We appreciate receiving the CARES ACT Funding and the American Rescue Act Funding; through both we were able to offer direct services to our Tribal Community as a whole. The combined funding has allowed us to provide services a greater scope of services for our Tribe than since we have been federally recognized. The additional funds totaling over thirty-five million dollars were utilized providing additional food, medical supplies, and financial assistance. However, now that the above-mentioned funding will soon be exhausted the Tribe will soon have to resort back to our annual budget of less than eight million. What must be understood the price of health care, food, fuel as well as all house hold utilities have continued to rise across the State and Country, which will cause hardship for the tribal members. The Narragansett will have to find ways to increase its annual funding to twenty-five million per year. As your office has been made aware the Tribe does not have full reservation status. United States Code Title eighteen section 1151-1153 Indian Country Indian Country Jurisdiction declaration would enable or grant the tribe full reservation status. Once completed, the Tribe would be able to establish economic development opportunities that will allow progress toward self-sufficiency.

The next concern discussed was regarding coastal wind turbines. Virtually all coastal tribes have had major concerns on all aspects of the ocean wind turbines project. Aside from the obvious potential environmental issues, our Tribe has explained time after time about the lack of timely consultation and overall input on these projects. The Tribe does not have enough staff or resources to review thousands of pages of documents and put staff in key places to protect or monitor work that has continued on an ongoing basis. As coastal people, we do have grave concerns about intact cultural resources being disturbed, even those that remain underwater. We can provide further information if your office deems it necessary.

We discussed the need for financial assistance for our police department. We currently have only one officer full time, yet require minimally six more, along with a dispatcher for twenty-four-hour coverage for our reservation land. We also are in need of assistance in financing our tribal court so we can adjudicate our own internal affairs. Once adequately staffed with additional funding we could then proceed with trying to provide affordable housing on reservation land.

The last talking point during your visit was the need to fill three part time positions:

1. A cultural resource program coordinator to insure we can maintain our culture and tradition.
2. A senior citizen program coordinator which would develop programs and keeping the elders involved in tribal community affairs.
3. A youth program coordinator which will develop a curriculum/plan for the youth and future leaders of the tribe.

We appreciate you and your staff for taking the time to allow us to voice the many concerns that plague the Narragansett Indian Tribe. It was truly an historic occasion and words alone cannot fully express what your visit means to our people. While additional time would have been welcome to conduct a more elaborate ceremony, and to offer our Tribal Community a chance for a meet and greet with yourself, it is also recognized that this visit was the first in what we hope will be several. Perhaps on your next visit we exchange cultural ideas and ways indicative of that of a Tribe-to-Tribe understanding.

In conclusion, we recognize and appreciate all you have done for Indian Country as a whole. You are in many ways the only hope we have for any type of advancement in today's world. We offer prayer that you continue in your current path of Secretary of the Interior for many years to come. Madam Secretary, it was such an honor, we look forward to continued dialogue with yourself. I remain

Respectfully Yours



Anthony Dean Stanton
Chief Sachem
Narragansett Indian Tribe