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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-3602

April 18, 2017

The Honorable Ryan Zinke
Secretary
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Zinke,

I write today to urge you to honor the mandatory pre-decision and meaningful government-to-government consultation with tribes when considering the delisting of the grizzly bear from the Endangered Species Act (ESA).

Numerous tribes have contacted me about the previous administration's lack of cooperation, specifically the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), in efforts regarding the delisting of the grizzly bear. As a result of FWS's actions, the Oglala Sioux tribe petitioned former Department of Interior Secretary Sally Jewell for an inquiry into FWS's conduct. Additionally, the Northern Arapaho tribe sent a Cease and Desist order to former Secretary Jewell due to the FWS's persistent misrepresentations in the media of the tribe's position regarding the delisting of the grizzly bear.

Former FWS Director Dan Ashe assured tribes they would be included in ongoing conversations involving the grizzly bear, but they were largely left out. As a result, nearly 50 tribes passed resolutions and more than 120 tribes joined together to sign a treaty entitled: "The Grizzly: A Treaty of Cooperation, Cultural Revitalization and Restoration," illustrating their opposition to delisting the grizzly bear following the process conducted by the former administration. The treaty also proposes reintroducing the grizzly bear into its historic range within several tribal nations that have biologically suitable habitats. This proposal would include relocating the hunting quota from Greater Yellowstone and the Crown of the Continent to sovereign tribal lands. Crow Nation Chairman AJ Not Afraid testified at the Senate Committee on Indian Affairs Oversight hearing entitled "Identifying Indian Affairs priorities for the Trump Administration," and outlined the blueprint for the Department of Interior to positively engage with tribes.

I am confident that if this process is conducted with consultation and engagement with tribal leaders, a satisfactory conclusion can be reached that is acceptable to all impacted entities. I urge you to take this opportunity to set the benchmark for how this process should be conducted in the future.

Sincerely,



Markwayne Mullin
Member of Congress