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United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

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The Honorable Julián Castro, Secretary
United States Department of Housing and Urban
Development
451 7th Street SW
Washington, DC 20410

The Honorable Tom Vilsack, Secretary
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Avenue SW
Washington, DC 20250

Dear Secretaries Castro and Vilsack:

I am pleased that the Administration recently announced the opening of the application period for the third round of Promise Zone designations. I write to express my strong support for the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa Indians (TMBCI) Tribal Promise Zone application and urge you to give it full and fair consideration. The Promise Zone designation helps build intensive federal partnerships and assists underserved communities, such as Indian tribes, in accessing critical resources that spur economic development.

In 2013, the President announced he would designate 20 Promise Zones nationwide: urban, rural, and tribal communities where the Administration would partner with local leaders to create jobs, increase economic activity, improve educational opportunities, and reduce violent crime. On January 9, 2014, the Administration announced the first urban, rural, and tribal Promise Zones and for those and subsequent communities selected the federal government has partnered to help the communities access the resources and expertise needed for growth.

Tribal nations in North Dakota face some of the most challenging issues in this country when developing their economies, in particular geographical isolation and limited access to resources. Awarding TMBCI a Promise Zone designation would begin to help TMBCI, in partnership with the Spirit Lake Nation and surrounding communities, attract the resources and expertise needed for revitalization. The Promise Zone designation will not only assist the tribe in providing better opportunities for its tribal members, but address economic barriers in one of the most isolated and persistently disadvantaged regions of North Dakota.

As described in the TMBCI Promise Zone application, the community's needs are dramatic. Fortunately, by providing the tribe the support that accompanies the Promise Zone designation, the federal government can help uphold its treaty and trust responsibilities by working with the tribe to create jobs, increase economic security, expand educational opportunities, increase access to quality, affordable housing and improve public safety. I am confident in the tribe's ability to succeed and look forward to working with the Administration and tribal, state and local officials in securing a sustainable future for TMBCI and surrounding communities. Thank you for your full consideration and attention to this request. Please let me know if you have any questions or need additional information regarding this proposal.

Sincerely,



Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senate

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