

June 24, 2009

NACo Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs Committee

Submitting County: Coconino County, Supervisor Lena Fowler

Resolution supporting the establishment of a liaison from the Department of the Interior, Bureau of Indian Affairs to NACo that will facilitate communication and information sharing with NACo and individual counties

Issue: The need for technical expertise specifically of federal Indian law, tribal history and tribal government to assist and help facilitate informed deliberations between federal, tribal and county governments.

Proposed Policy: NACo requests the Department of the Interior assign a liaison with experience with tribal and local governments to facilitate communication and information sharing between tribal government, NACo and county governments. The liaison position should be modeled upon the current successful liaison relationships with the Department of Interior and U.S. Forest Service.

Background:

NACo has wisely established a Native American Affairs sub-committee to the Finance and Intergovernmental Affairs steering committee. The sub-committee has created a cross-jurisdictional, cross-cultural forum to discuss important issues affecting county governments and tribal nations. The sub-committee is also responsible for providing important feedback to the steering committee regarding proposed NACo resolutions that request a change in federal policy regarding the tribal nations and local non-tribal governments.

Previous sub-committee discussions, while productive on many levels, would have benefited from the participation of a technical expert to answer questions, provide context and background of relevant legal authorities, and assist in identifying avenues for resolving differences. The efforts of the sub-committee will be strengthened in the future by NACo working with the Department of the Interior to assign a specific technical expert as a liaison with NACo.

Fiscal/Urban/Rural Impact: The establishment of a dedicated position would not have a direct fiscal impact on county government operations.