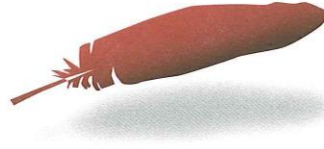


# National Indian Health Board



## National Indian Health Board Resolution 22 – 09

### CALLING FOR A MARSHALL PLAN FOR TRIBAL NATIONS

**WHEREAS** the National Indian Health Board (NIHB), established in 1972, serves all Federally recognized American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments by advocating for the improvement of health care delivery to American Indians and Alaska Natives, as well as upholding the federal government’s trust responsibility to American Indian and Alaska Native Tribal governments; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribal Nations are inherently sovereign political entities, as recognized by the United States from its earliest interactions with Tribal Nations. However, over time, the United States has impeded our exercise of sovereignty and taken our land and resources to generate its own land base, wealth, and strength; and

**WHEREAS**, through these takings, the United States has assumed unique trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations and Native people. However, it has consistently failed to live up to these obligations—both by failing to deliver on the funding it owes to Tribal Nations in exchange for its resource takings, and by restricting Tribal Nations’ full exercise of our inherent sovereign governmental authorities; and

**WHEREAS**, these failures on the part of the United States have caused tremendous harm to Tribal Nations that remains evident today in all indicators of social, economic, and public well-being; and

**WHEREAS**, in December 2018, the United States Commission on Civil Rights (USCCR) issued a report entitled, “Broken Promises: Continuing Federal Funding Shortfall for Native Americans,”; and

**WHEREAS**, the “Broken Promises” report came after years of advocacy from Tribal Nations and organizations seeking an update to the 2003 “Quiet Crisis” report, which found deep failures in the delivery of federal fiduciary trust and treaty obligations; and

**WHEREAS**, the “Broken Promises” report found that the funding of the federal trust responsibility and obligations remains “grossly inadequate” and a “barely perceptible and decreasing percentage of agency budgets,”; and

**WHEREAS**, though these chronic failures have persisted throughout changes in Administration and Congress, it is time that both the legislative and executive branches confront and correct them; and

**WHEREAS**, much like the U.S. investment in the rebuilding of European nations following World War II via the Marshall Plan, the legislative and executive branches should commit to the same level of responsibility to assisting in the rebuilding of Tribal Nations, as our current circumstances are, in large part, directly attributable to the shameful acts and policies of the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, the Marshall Plan proposed an unprecedented U.S. foreign aid investment to rebuild Europe with the mutually beneficial goal of achieving a stable economy and sustainable peace. It carried forth the idea that later came to be known in the international human rights sphere as the “Responsibility to Rebuild,” which is an obligation taken on by one country when it militarily intervenes in or occupies another; and

**WHEREAS**, in just the first year of the Marshall Plan, the United States appropriated approximately \$4 billion in aid, which amounted to 13% of U.S. budget expenditures at the time. The Congressional Research Service places the Marshall Plan’s total cost at about \$13.3 billion in historical dollars. At the time, that amount represented about 1–2% of U.S. Gross Domestic Product; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States was willing to make a substantial investment in European nations after the destruction of World War II, yet it has not been willing to make the same kind of investment domestically, where it bears a much greater responsibility; and

**WHEREAS**, the concept of a Marshall Plan-like investment for Tribal Nations draws on the same restorative justice, political, and economic principles that underlay the European Marshall Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, through a domestic Tribal Nations Marshall Plan, the United States would recognize and take responsibility for the trust and treaty obligations arising out of its permanent occupation of Tribal homelands and our massive cession of resources that built the foundation of today’s America; and

**WHEREAS**, the United States owes a perpetual debt to Tribal Nations that has been compounded by our displacement, infringements on our sovereignty, and ongoing conditions that impair and directly harm the welfare of Tribal Nations and our citizens; and

**WHEREAS**, beyond generating payments on the United States’ debt to Tribal Nations, a Tribal Nations Marshall Plan would develop mutually beneficial economic growth for Tribal Nations, surrounding communities, and the United States—creating stability, improved relations, and shared prosperity; and

**WHEREAS**, additionally, it would pave the way for the United States to become an international leader in the Indigenous rights sphere and adhere more closely to the United States’

espoused moral values, providing an opportunity to take actions that exemplify the idea of American exceptionalism; and

**WHEREAS**, the Tribal Nations Marshall Plan proposed in this document would represent a significant one-time payment on the United States' debt to Tribal Nations, but it would in no way put an end to that debt, which stems from the United States' trust and treaty obligations that exist in perpetuity; and

**WHEREAS**, the method of delivery and the use requirements attached to the Marshall Plan-like investment, and to future funding, will play a large role in the effectiveness of the investment in Tribal Nations. The features of the investment must reflect the status of Tribal Nations as sovereign governments and the United States' trust and treaty obligations; and

**WHEREAS**, funding must flow directly, consistently, and predictably to Tribal Nations. For this reason, funding must not take the form of competitive grants, must be mandatory rather than discretionary, and Tribal Nations must have the option to accept all federal funding directly and via a more streamlined channel than is often used now; and

**WHEREAS**, a Marshall Plan for Tribal Nations necessitates the establishment of a Department of Tribal Nation Relations to carry out the United States' trust relationship with Tribal Nations—reflecting the diplomatic Nation to-Nation relationship between the United States and Tribal Nations, facilitating comprehensive federal agency coordination, and ensuring the seamless flow of funds to Tribal Nations and our communities; and

**WHEREAS**, Tribal Nations must not be prevented from using federal funding to best meet the unique needs of our people, and, thus, there should be no restrictive use limitations or burdensome reporting requirements attached; and

**WHEREAS**, like the European Marshall Plan, the parameters of the Tribal Nations Marshall Plan must be determined in close consultation with, and subject to the consent of, the funding recipients: Tribal Nations; and

**WHEREAS**, United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund has issued a white paper outlining the arguments for and parameters of a Marshall Plan for Tribal Nations;

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** the National Indian Health Board extends its support to a Marshall Plan for Tribal Nations, including the findings and proposals contained in the United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund white paper; and be it further

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, the National Indian Health Board calls upon the United States to immediately undertake actions, in coordination with Tribal Nations, to implement a Marshall Plan for Tribal Nations, as described in the United South and Eastern Tribes Sovereignty Protection Fund white paper.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that this resolution shall be the policy of the National Indian Health Board until it is withdrawn or modified by subsequent resolution.

**CERTIFICATION**

The foregoing resolution was adopted by the Board, with quorum present, on the 29<sup>th</sup> day of November, 2022.



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**Chairperson, William Smith**

**ATTEST:**



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**Vice Chairperson, Nickolaus Lewis**